

# RELIGION IN LITERATURE

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# RELIGION IN LIFE

A CHRISTIAN QUARTERLY

Vol. XIV

Autumn Number, 1945

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# Some Recollections of the Years of Occupation

PASTOR MARC BOEGNER

**R**ELIGION IN LIFE has been gracious enough to ask me to tell its readers, from my personal recollections, what the attitude of the French Protestant churches was during the years of the Occupation (1940-44)—and, in general, to explain what the attitude of French Protestantism was. I am all the more willing to grant this request because it gives me an opportunity to set forth some facts which, up to the present time, have been unknown not only in other countries but even in France.

\* \* \* \* \*

In September, 1939, when the second World War broke out, the French Protestant churches were almost all organized into the French Protestant Federation, which had been established in 1905. Since 1929 I have been President of the Council of that Federation. Its chief purpose is to manifest, in the religious, moral and social realm, whenever circumstances require it, the unity of the French Protestant churches. It is thus through the medium of the Council of the Federation that the various churches—Reformed, Lutheran, Baptist, etc.—make known to the French government or nation their point of view on the great problems with regard to which it is their duty to voice the demands of the Christian faith. It is the Council of the Federation which, by common consent of all the churches, brings to the officials of the government the necessary protests whenever, under one form or another, religious liberty is threatened or the moral life of the nation compromised. These protests are made by the President of the French Protestant Federation who, by instruction of the Council and with its consent, speaks to the authorities and to the head of the government in the name of the French Protestant churches.

This will explain why, during the month of May, 1940—several days after the beginning of the German offensive against the Netherlands, Belgium and France—when the enemy forces in their terrifying advance were threatening Paris, the Council of the Federation decided that, in case the French government should leave the capital, the Protestant

Federation should also leave Paris and keep in close contact with the government officials.

I should add that since I was also President of the National Council of the Reformed Church of France, which includes the majority of French Protestants, I had no right to remain in the occupied capital and thus run the risk of being cut off from the majority of the Reformed Church parishes, which are situated in the south of France. Apparently, in the early days of the invasion no one expected that a few weeks later the German armies would reach the Pyrenees.

It was under these conditions that I left Paris on June 11 after the government had left—two days prior to the arrival of enemy troops before the capital. It had been decided that the headquarters of the French Protestant Federation should be temporarily located in Bordeaux. I arrived in that city on Sunday, June 16, a few hours after the President of the Republic and the ministers, never dreaming that I should be forced to leave again on Monday, when the German army surrounded the city before occupying it.

It was to Nîmes finally, the Protestant metropolis of southeastern France, that I decided to go. At the beginning of August, when the establishment of the line of demarcation cut France in two and made communication between the two zones impossible, the members of the National Council of the Reformed Church who were living in the free zone, convened by my efforts, decided to establish in Nîmes the central headquarters of the Reformed Church of France. I established myself with those of my colleagues who had been able to join me and began a constant round of visits to the various regions of Protestant France, varied by the journeys which I was compelled to make to Vichy.

The situation was extremely delicate. The majority of the members of the National Council of the Reformed Church of France were in the free zone and so were able to meet regularly in Nîmes and make decisions which would be immediately applicable in all the parishes of the zone. But because of the line of demarcation and the ban upon all correspondence between the two zones, with the exception of certain printed matter which could carry only family news, it was impossible to keep in touch with that part of the National Council which was in the occupied zone. And we had to be careful not to make any decisions which would run the risk of attracting the attention of the Occupation officials to the churches of the occupied zone. It was only in November, 1940, that the resumption

of travel made it possible for two of our colleagues from Paris to participate in a session of the National Council at Lyon and to establish our first contact.

On the other hand, all the members of the Council of the French Protestant Federation were in Paris. The President alone was in Nîmes, and he had the task of speaking in the name of the Council to the authorities. It was difficult for the Council in Paris to arrive at decisions without knowing my opinion; it was even more difficult for me to speak and act with respect to Vichy without having the formal assent of my colleagues. The unbounded confidence which we had in one another enabled us to avoid misunderstandings and to surmount the infrequent difficulties that arose. We lived apart from one another but in such a deep communion of suffering and hope that, beforehand and without being able to write to one another, we were sure of being in accord.

\* \* \* \* \*

I went to Vichy for the first time near the end of July, two weeks after the National Assembly had given up its constitutional powers to Marshal Petain. I went there for two important reasons.

In the first place, there was a rumor that the government intended to propose to Rome a new Concordat. It was important to find out its intentions in this regard and to ascertain whether the regime of separation of Church and State would or would not be modified. I stated to the Vice-President of the Council of Ministers, Pierre Laval, and to the Minister of Justice, Albert, that the French Protestant churches were altogether satisfied to live and act in complete independence of the State and that they would wish to have the regime of separation of Church and State maintained, with some modifications which had been imposed long ago. Then the Minister of Justice informed me that, several days previously, Cardinal Gerlier, Archbishop of Lyon, the only cardinal living in the unoccupied zone, had made a similar statement to him, adding that the Roman Catholic church would not wish at any price to seem in any way to profit by the misfortunes which had overwhelmed France in order to obtain a religious regime more favorable to its interests.

I take this occasion to add that the highest officials of the Roman Church in France saw from the first the danger to the Church which was to be found in any signs of interest and anxiety which the Vichy

government might show toward it. They saw very clearly that, if the Roman Church gave the impression of wanting to exercise an influence on the temporal power, it would open the way to an anticlerical movement. Cardinal Gerlier said to me one day that he made a practice of going very infrequently to Vichy in order not to give occasion for any suspicion of political motives. And the last time I saw Marshal Petain, after I had been delegated to protest against the threatened deportation of young girls, he told me that the Archbishop of Paris had said to him during a recent visit, "Be a good Christian, but above all don't be clerical."

The second purpose of my first trip to Vichy was to get a clear understanding of the policy which was likely to be followed with regard to the youth movements. A Ministry of Youth had just been set up. It was destined soon to be abolished and replaced by a General Secretaryship of Youth. In the occupied zone the German authorities were preparing to pass an ordinance suspending the operation of all the youth movements. But were those in the unoccupied zone to retain their freedom of action? Did not certain government declarations give cause for fear that Vichy wanted to use the Christian youth movements to lead to the formation of a unique youth (*une jeunesse unique*) which would become a political youth movement? These questions and others rightly occupied the Protestant Youth Council (C. P. J.), for which our five great youth movements had just adopted a constitution and of which I had been asked to be President.

In fact, no one knew exactly at Vichy at the end of July, 1940, what they wanted to do with French youth; in what way they would try to associate it with the national recovery and the agreement which would be asked of the Christian youth movements in this plan. The Catholic youth represented a considerable power. Naturally the political youth movements had to be disbanded. At the end of several months it was proposed to give to the Christian movements and to one or two other movements, of whose educational character there could be no doubt, a charter which would assure them entire freedom of action. The Protestant Youth Council (C. P. J.), representing the Protestant movements, agreed to receive the charter but set forth in a written note the spirit in which they intended to pursue among youth their evangelistic and educational work and their work for the moral and spiritual welfare of the country.



Numerous difficulties arose between our movements and the General Secretariat for Youth. For example, when it was announced that non-Aryans could no longer belong to approved youth organizations, the Protestant Youth Council immediately wrote a letter of protest by which it gave official notice that it would stand by its principles. And even to the last it has stood by them. Later on in this article we shall see how, through the medium of *Cimade* (*Comité inter-mouvements auprès des évacués*) the Protestant youth movements took a most active part in all efforts that were made to aid, succor and save the persecuted non-Aryans.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was on the Jewish question that the French Protestant churches first felt called upon to let their voice be heard.

In the fall of 1940 the German authorities had introduced in the occupied zone measures against the Jews which had aroused strong feeling in all quarters. On several occasions I had made protests on this subject at Vichy. The Council of the Protestant Federation, assembled in Paris, wished that a vigorous effort might be made in the unoccupied zone to persuade the Petain government to oppose the enforcement of the German ordinances and, in any case, to refuse to take similar action for the unoccupied zone. That is why, at the beginning of 1941, the National Council of the Reformed Church instructed me to write two official letters—one to the Chief Rabbi of France, asking him to express to the Jewish communities the deep sympathy of the Reformed churches and to assure them that we were doing everything possible to secure a modification of the measures taken against them; the other to Admiral Darlan, who had become Vice-President of the Council in place of Pierre Laval, to protest vigorously and to ask that the anti-Jewish legislation be revoked. The last letter has not yet been published. The first, on the other hand, was published immediately. Finding in it the first official testimony of Christian love which had been addressed to them, the French Jews wanted to make it known as widely as possible. It was soon distributed, in the unoccupied zone, in tens of thousands of copies. In Paris the German weekly paper (published in French) *Je suis partout*, printed it under the following title, "An Inadmissible Letter from the Head of the French Protestant Churches." A Jew who came to Nîmes from Paris to thank the Reformed Church of France told me that the

Jews of the occupied zone referred to our protest as "the first light in our night."

It would be difficult to exaggerate the stir caused by our letter to the Chief Rabbi. Published in Switzerland, in Sweden, in Great Britain and in the United States, it was broadcast to the whole world. In French prison camps in Germany it aroused lively discussions. In the interest of the truth I must admit that it was not approved unanimously by French Protestants. Some middle-class groups did not hesitate to express lively dissatisfaction with it. Since I had been the signer of the letter, I was attacked with great violence. I was denounced before Marshal Petain, who did not need to be told of my feelings on the subject, since I had expressed them to him personally on several occasions. And I recall that one day, when I had gone to interview the Minister of the Interior, Pucheu—who was later shot—regarding questions having to do with the youth movements, he said to me suddenly, "You have put yourself in a very delicate situation by your letter to the Chief Rabbi." "You would like to have me arrested, Sir," I said. "Oh," he replied, "I don't arrest people for that." I knew, as a matter of fact, that my arrest had been contemplated. Paris newspapers financed by the Germans were surprised that I was not haled off to my fate.

The great majority of the French Protestants gave unequivocal approval to the protests made in their name. Moreover, I always felt myself upheld by them when, later on, new demands had to be made which, because of circumstances, I had to make without having had the opportunity to consult either the Council of the French Protestant Federation or the National Council of the Reformed Church.

Up to the summer of 1942 the Vichy government, which was able to make an impression on the German officials with our protests, had succeeded in removing from the unoccupied zone the particularly obnoxious anti-Jewish measures—among others, the wearing of the yellow star. But in July violent persecutions broke out in Paris, terrible scenes took place in which tens of thousands of Jews were arrested and mass deportations began. The Council of the Protestant Federation, over the signature of its Vice-President, Pastor André N. Bertrand, addressed a courageous protest to Ambassador de Brinon, begging him to communicate it to the officials of the Occupation. He sent me a copy, addressed to Marshal Petain, to whom I read it personally before leaving it in his hands. Nevertheless, things went from bad to worse. Pierre Laval,



who had returned to power after a few months, was unable to resist the German demands. He ordered mass arrests of foreign Jews residing in the unoccupied zone. In the villages and towns the pursuit of the Jews began. Tragic incidents grew more and more frequent. It was impossible to keep silent any longer.

Sure of being in accord with the Council of the Protestant Federation in whose name I had resolved to speak, I wrote Marshal Petain a letter which I took pains to put in his own hands. I soon learned that he had immediately sent a copy to Pierre Laval. I transmitted the text of my letter to Cardinal Gerlier, Archbishop of Lyon, whom I had gone to see the day before to ask him to write the Marshal at the same time as I did. I still do not know how this letter fell into the hands of the United States Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Tuck. Certain it is that he knew of it and transmitted it to Washington, where it was broadcast. A few days later, when I was getting the French news from London, I was surprised to hear my letter, translated from English, in a different French from the original! And, when I happened to meet at the station a Catholic priest whom I knew, he told me that my letter had been read the day before in a large gathering of priests. The next week mimeographed copies were being distributed in the Flower Market of Marseilles!

A letter to Marshal Petain was not enough. In view of the gravity of events, I decided to go immediately in person to Vichy. After being received by Pierre Laval, I set forth clearly to him the position of the French Protestant churches, namely, before speaking to their constituency, they would speak to the men who have assumed the responsibility of power and demand that they put an end to these intolerable persecutions; if these men refused to act or declared themselves powerless to remedy the situation, our churches would then make a solemn public protest.

The interview was painful. Pierre Laval told me several times that he could not act otherwise and that if he arrested the foreign Jews and allowed them to be deported like so many cattle, it was to save the French Jews. The same story was told me that afternoon by Bousquet, General Secretary of Police, to whom Pierre Laval had sent me to ask for details of the measures taken in the occupied and the unoccupied zones.

At the very moment when I was making these protests, some courageous bishops were having read, in the churches of their dioceses, pastoral letters condemning the persecutions. Feeling ran high. The National Council of the Reformed Church, after having given its ap-

probation to what I had undertaken as President of the Protestant Federation, addressed to its pastors and church members a letter which was read on the following Sunday in the parishes of the unoccupied zone. The authorities, learning of the matter too late, were powerless to prevent this reading.

It was in these tragic circumstances that *Cimade*, which I have already mentioned, and the chaplains of concentration camps tried in the most touching and courageous way to save the Jews who were threatened with deportation. I have in mind particularly the chaplain of a camp near Aix-en-Provence who, day and night, made tireless efforts to snatch unfortunate non-Aryan Christians from the hands of the police who were forcing them to enter the cars which were to take them to Germany. He succeeded in saving a goodly number, for whom he found a refuge.

*Cimade* was for long months put at the service of the terrific distress of the foreign Jews interned in the concentration camps of the unoccupied zone. Under the direction of Madeleine Barot, *Cimade*, with members of the youth movements, had made up teams which had obtained permission to live in the camps and gather the Protestant non-Aryans together in order to bring them spiritual and moral comfort and to attempt some evangelistic work. The results obtained were gratifying. The authorities had even permitted *Cimade* to open, at Chambon-sur-Lignon, a refuge to which they committed selected refugees for whom *Cimade* took the responsibility. When the mass arrests commenced, this house was immediately threatened as well as the center established by the European Fund for the Aid of Students. Madeleine Barot was not long in making her decision. Even as at Lyon with Father Chaillet, founder of the admirable *Cahiers du Temoignage Chretien* which secretly exert such a profound influence, she had succeeded in saving from deportation great numbers of Jewish children, she undertook to save non-Aryan Christians whom the police had given into her custody. Aided by students, by young girls, by courageous Christian women, she organized secret depots, secret journeys, and secret crossings of the frontier between France and Switzerland for a great number of non-Aryans who, had it not been for *Cimade*, would have taken the road that leads to Siberia or to Poland. Countless lives were saved in this way, but at what a cost of effort and danger! Several collaborators of *Cimade*, both men and women, were arrested. A young pastor who often conducted Jews into Switzerland across Mt. Blanc was denounced, arrested, haled into court,

and condemned to imprisonment. At his trial the magistrates were surprised to hear Pastor Eberhard, of Lyon, whom I had asked to represent me on this occasion, set forth magnificently the attitude which the French Protestant churches had taken in regard to the persecutions.

Up until the time when France was liberated *Cimade* continued its saving work. God only knows how many unfortunate victims of racial prejudice owe to it the fact that they can today look at the future with confidence!

\* \* \* \* \*

When, about the first of March, 1943, the Occupation authorities consented to make more flexible the line of demarcation, which the invasion of the unoccupied zone in November, 1942, had rendered pointless, I decided to return immediately to Paris. I arrived the fourth of March and found there, to my delight, the greater part of my library and my papers which the Gestapo had taken away from my apartment January 19, 1941, but which they had been obliged to bring back some months later.

Thereby hangs a curious tale! On July 11, 1940, less than a month after the occupation of Paris, the Gestapo had visited my study and had taken away certain papers. On the nineteenth of January, 1941, three of the Gestapo agents surprised my daughter in our apartment, which she was preparing to dismantle. They questioned her for several hours, telling her that I was working on the formation of an "Internationale" of the Protestant churches of Europe, like the Anglican Archbishops, who were merely vulgar politicians. They added that, if I returned to Paris, I would be arrested and that they were reserving for me something worse than a mere concentration camp. Finally they emptied my study of all the books and papers that it contained.

My daughter and one of my sons complained to the French and German authorities in Paris about this robbery. And, astonishingly enough, several weeks later, my daughter had a visit from Gestapo officers who told her that my books and papers would be returned to her, with the exception of those which they believed should be retained. As a matter of fact, all the books referring to the ecumenical movement were kept by the Germans but practically all the other books in my library were brought back a month later and deposited in a heap in a room of our parish house.

Everyone was expecting that I would be arrested on my return to

Paris. I was scarcely settled when a high German officer asked me to receive him. I knew that he was especially charged with investigating the churches and that he came occasionally to see the Archbishop of Paris. I arranged a meeting with him in my study at the Protestant Federation. We talked politely. He asked for another interview for the purpose of putting some questions to me. I expressed the desire to know the questions in advance so that I might reflect about them. Doctor Reichl—that was the officer's name—answered that his questions would have to do with the ecumenical movement. He supposed, as a matter of fact—and he made no effort to conceal it during his second visit—that I was familiar with the views about the war and the postwar period which the English held. Ah, if I could only have shared with him all that I knew—but needless to say my lips remained closed!

The situation became increasingly tense. On several occasions I had complained to Doctor Reichl about the arrest and deportation of French pastors. I never secured from him any amelioration of their situation. But one day while the National Synod of the French Reformed Church was in session in Paris, he summoned me peremptorily to his office. There was no possibility of not obeying such a summons. I went to see him. He told me immediately, in accordance with instructions from Berlin, that he was requesting me to ask the National Synod to make a protest against the bombing of France by the American and English armies and against the "terrorism." The Cardinals and Archbishops, he added, had just made public such a protest. It would make a great impression in Berlin if the French Reformed Church should address a similar message to its constituency.

When this demand was brought to the attention of the National Council of the Reformed Church, the Council rightly concluded that it was the duty of the French Protestant Federation to reply, inasmuch as the Federation alone had the right to speak in the name of all the churches. The reply of the Federation was, as it could not help but be, a frank and clear refusal to accede to the German demand. "The French Protestant Federation," we wrote to Doctor Reichl, "has never been in the habit of speaking to its constituency at the demand of a temporal power, but only when it has been convinced that it was obeying its one Lord, Jesus Christ."

I never saw Doctor Reichl again, for he left Paris suddenly several days before the liberation.

Why I was never seriously molested I do not know. I was held responsible, I know, for various letters to our constituency which were addressed to them either by the Council of the Federation or by the Council of the Reformed Church. The last time I saw Pierre Laval to protest against the ban on including any kind of address in religious services broadcast on Sunday and against reading passages from the Old Testament, he warned me that Ambassador Abetz, in the course of a recent interview, had begged him to call my attention to the necessity for watching my words and actions. I was never able to learn the motives for this warning.

All this belongs to the past. France is liberated. The Allies have brought victory. The preaching of the gospel is no longer threatened in Western Europe. God grant that, in the years to come, the Protestant churches of France may continue to safeguard their spiritual independence and that they may glorify it in a France for whose restoration they intend to strive with all their might.

*Editor's note:* RELIGION IN LIFE is indebted to Miss Aenid A. Sanborn, Editorial Secretary, Federal Council of Churches, for assistance in translating this article.

# The Humanist and the Christian

## A Study in Similarities and Contrasts

KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE

**H**OW far can the humanist and the Christian agree? To what extent can they work together? What basic differences, if any, must they recognize? These questions are important. In our modern Western civilization, and particularly in the democracies, humanists and Christians find themselves in close and often intimate association. In college and university faculties, among our writers, and in general among those who reflect the temper of the time, humanists are legion. Often they appear to be more numerous than Christians. Certainly they are often more vocal and aggressive. Frequently the Christian assumes before them an air of apology and has an uneasy suspicion that they have the better of the argument. He is tempted to emphasize such aspects of his faith as seem to correspond with the humanists' position and to minimize such features as contradict it. Before he knows it, for most practical purposes he himself has become a humanist. This is the easier, because in some of its features the humanists' creed resembles the Christian's, and the latter must acknowledge in many humanists a passion for social righteousness which puts him to shame. Yet between the humanist and the Christian fundamental differences exist. They are of major importance for both individuals and society. The Christian must recognize them and either boldly hold to them or surrender his Christian position.

But what is a humanist as we would here use the term? The appellation, it need scarcely be said, is employed in a variety of ways. We associate it first with the Renaissance and the revival of classical learning. We recall that one of the outstanding humanists in that sense of the term, Erasmus, was a pronounced Christian. In general, however, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, humanism and its exponent, the humanist, have come to represent a philosophical attitude which puts man in the center of the intellectual universe, which asserts the sufficiency of human effort to attain all such knowledge as may be needed for the welfare of mankind, and which rules out divine initiative. Its trend is nontheistic and away from dependence upon any higher power. It is not necessarily optimistic. Indeed, some of its more thoughtful exponents tend toward



pessimism. Yet many humanists are insistently hopeful concerning unaided man and his possibilities.

An outstanding representative of the humanist approach in our day is Lewis Mumford. In a succession of volumes large and small he has given a notable analysis of the problems of the times. His writings are all the more important because they adopt the historical approach and view the present against the background of the past. Particularly in a series of three volumes Mr. Mumford has presented his views. In the order in which they have appeared, they are *Technics and Civilization* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1934, pp. xi, 495), *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938, pp. xii, 586), and *The Condition of Man* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1944, pp. x, 467). *Technics and Civilization* is, in general, a history of the development of the machine in the Occident and of the effect of the machine upon human culture. *The Culture of Cities* is a parallel study, tracing the changes in urban life from the medieval town to the industrial and commercial centers of our day. *The Condition of Man* is a history of Western civilization, chiefly in its nonpolitical aspects, from the Roman Empire to the present. All three volumes are buttressed by extensive critical bibliographies and are characterized by a wide range of reading, vigorously expressed views, and a readable style. To them must be added two other books, both of them much shorter, which have grown out of the earlier stages of World War II, *Men Must Act* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939, pp. 176) and *Faith For Living* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940, pp. ix, 333). The first, written after Munich, was an appeal to the United States to join in the struggle against fascism (under which category Germany as well as Italy was included). The second arose out of the challenge presented by fascism. It sees fascism as a symptom of the desperate illness of Western civilization, insists upon the necessity of renewal, and suggests a program or, better, the main principles through which such renewal can be had.

This is not the place for a detailed and comprehensive review or critical study and appraisal of these volumes. In them the specialist, particularly the professional historian, will find much of what he believes to be factual error. He will, however, discover many generalizations which will stimulate him even when he cannot agree. In some phases of the volumes Mr. Mumford clearly speaks as an expert and there commands respect both for his knowledge and his insights. It is not of

such matters that we would write. We are here concerned with the degree of agreement which exists between Mr. Mumford and the Christian and the points at which the Christian must take exception to him. It is with Mr. Mumford as a humanist that we will have to do.

Finding points of agreement with Mr. Mumford is both easy and pleasant. Mr. Mumford sets great store by human personality. He is distressed by the damage done it by the modern development of the machine, especially in what he calls the "paleotechnic phase," and by the injuries dealt it by the manufacturing towns and the modern city. He maintains "man's chief purpose" to be "the creation and preservation of values" and declares that this "is what gives meaning to our civilization" and that "the participation in this is what gives significance, ultimately, to the individual human life." He believes in democracy, with the dream which that ideal holds forth for the development of the ordinary man. In all this he is committed to some of the values which Christianity prizes. Indeed, it is probable that historically much of the dignity which he accords the common man has been derived from Christianity through the long education which that faith has given the Occidental spirit. He is not unaware of the debt of the twentieth century to Christianity for the moral standards of the Occident, what he calls the "unearned increment" derived from that faith. Like the Christian, Mr. Mumford is convinced that the illness of our day is basically moral, and that the theologian, with his emphasis upon corruption and evil, was "by far the better realist" than what he calls the "pragmatic liberal." He deliberately employs the word "sin" and believes good and evil, virtue and sin to be facts. He denounces the exaggeration of nationalism and stands for "universality." He preaches the necessity of renewal, the importance of building "balanced personalities; personalities that will be capable of drawing upon our immense stores of energy, knowledge and wealth without being demoralized by them." He pleads for reorientation and for applying a "new criterion"—how far "every activity and every plan" . . . "seeks to further the processes of life-fulfillment and how much respect it pays to the needs of the whole personality." He quotes approvingly, as "ultimate in their wisdom" and as applicable to individual men and to nations and peoples the words: "He that loseth his life shall find it." Nor does he despair of the future. He holds it possible to achieve renewal. He does not believe that perfection can be attained. He contends that "perfection itself would mean death." "Good and



bad are forever in a deadly grapple." He maintains that "salvation lies in the effort, not in the actual achievement." Yet he holds that the struggle against evil is worth while and that progress can be registered in the fight. He even seems to approach, somewhat vaguely, a belief in God. He speaks of "the marvelous Being which encloses us" and as beholding "in our own divinity the promise of a greater One that man can never come face to face with: the purpose that bottoms all purposes: the perfection that surpasses all perfections." In all this, clearly, Mr. Mumford and the Christian have much in common.

While these agreements between Mr. Mumford and the Christian are interesting and constitute a ground for fellowship and common action, the differences are even more striking. They are, indeed, basic. As over against them the resemblances are superficial.

Fundamental is the character and place of God in the universe and in history. This is seen in the view which Mr. Mumford has of Jesus. He has high praise for Jesus as a man and for His deeds and teachings. But in his summary of Jesus he has almost no mention of God. To leave out God from any account of Jesus is to miss the foundation upon which Jesus built His life and the spring of all that He said and did. The omission is a distortion, perhaps blind, possibly deliberate, an effort to make of Jesus a humanist. Here is a suppression of one of the plainest facts of history. Jesus cannot be understood apart from His belief in God and His convictions about God. Similarly, Mr. Mumford professes to see, as have many other humanists, a misunderstanding of Jesus in the place which the disciples gave to Him as the incarnate Son of God and as the means by which God wrought for the salvation of men. He would put in sharp contrast the teaching and life of Jesus on the one hand and the teaching about Jesus on the other. He views Christianity as just another mystery religion, a conformation to a religious development of the age which did violence to Jesus. Not believing in God, or at least not in God who reveals Himself in human life, he insists upon his humanistic view of Jesus. This is to deny the validity of the basic distinguishing characteristic of Christianity, that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," and that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." In spite of deceptive resemblances, Christianity differs radically from the mystery religions in that it is centered not about myth but about history. It declares that in

Jesus, a historic person and not a mythical figure, God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, has acted in time and that through the Spirit "who proceedeth from the Father and the Son" he continues to do so.

Because he rules out God who was incarnate in Jesus, Mr. Mumford has a view of the nature and destiny of man which differs strikingly from that held by Christians. Like Christians, he believes in the value and dignity of human personality. Like them, as we have suggested, he would seek to conserve personality. He would strive to remove those aspects of civilization which do damage to men. Seemingly, as does the Christian, he even views the illness of culture in our time as due to sin and holds that the cure lies in conversion. He shares with the New Testament the conviction that perfection is not to be attained within time, but that so long as history continues, the struggle between good and evil will continue. Yet because he is a humanist, Mr. Mumford could not agree with such widely accepted statements of the Christian conviction as "this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God"; "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever"; and "Thou hast formed us for thyself and our hearts are restless until they find rest in thee." He could not subscribe to the command of Jesus: "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect," or join in Paul's prayer for his Christians that they may "be filled unto all the fulness of God." He recognizes sin, but not as an offense against God. To him sin cannot have the depth of tragedy which it has for the Christian. To the latter it is missing the mark of "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"; it is perverting the divine image implanted in man by God. The depravity to which it leads is greater because of the contrast with the goal which God has set before men. Similarly, while the humanist speaks of the necessity of renewal, he knows nothing of the new birth made possible by the grace of God in Christ Jesus. If he thinks of it at all, it is in the guise of identification with the savior god of the mystery cults and not the rich life, with its fruits of the Spirit—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control"—of which the New Testament speaks, and with its endless growth in fellowship with the eternal God. The nature of personality, as the Christian conceives it, has a much wider range of evil and of good than the humanist deems possible. The goal toward which the Christian strives and which he longs to have all men attain includes much, perhaps all, which the humanist of the high type of Mr. Mumford desires, but it also has more. That

"more" is so very much more that it adds infinitely greater dignity to human nature than is possible for the humanist to comprehend.

Like many another humanist, Mr. Mumford quite underestimates the place of Christianity in history. As do numbers of other writers, including some Christians, he believes Christianity to have reached the apex of its influence in the European Middle Ages and since then to have been a declining force. He sees that today many intellectuals, some of whom were reared as Christians, have dismissed Christianity as a diminishing factor in the world scene. With many others, he would regard the churches as examples of social lag, dying remnants of a bygone age. This attitude arises out of ignorance or blindness, a distorted perspective, and a misunderstanding of the fashion in which Christianity operates in history.

In common with many others, Mr. Mumford exaggerates the place of Christianity in medieval Europe. To be sure, Western Europe of the Middle Ages was professedly Christian. Christianity was the community religion. It was also influential in shaping almost every phase of life. It was felt as a powerful factor in more aspects of life than it was in the Roman Empire. During much of the period the Church was the most potent, and during all the era it was geographically the most extensive administrative structure in Western Europe. Although this was true, much practical skepticism existed. Many among the higher classes gave lip service to the faith, but, except for some outward conformity to rites, ignored or despised it. Among the masses the situation was little better. In the Church itself failure to approximate even a modicum of Christian morals was notorious. Students for holy orders often parodied the sacraments and violated in the grossest fashion the ethical requirements of their religion. Reformers were always finding it necessary to struggle against the sale of church offices, the neglect of clerical celibacy, the debasing of the life of the monasteries, and the use of church offices for purely secular ends. Even some of the reformers were guilty of pluralism and the neglect of their duties. Superstition was rampant. Indeed, the so-called ages of faith were as much, if not more, ages of credulity.

Moreover, the Europe of the Middle Ages was only a small part of the human scene. In population and wealth it was far behind the Arab Moslem world, China and India. Politically none of its states, in comparison with the great Asiatic contemporary empires, was better than a third- or fourth-class power. At the height of the Middle Ages Christianity was more widely spread geographically than it or any other

religion had ever been. Yet in most of the lands where it was found it was represented by minorities. It was dominant numerically only in parts of Europe and in certain small portions of Western Asia.

In contrast with what Mr. Mumford and his fellow humanists would have us believe, if mankind is viewed as a whole, Christianity is a much more potent factor today than in medieval Europe. Indeed, it is much more influential as a world-wide force than it has ever been. Its effect has been mounting during the past four hundred years and particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the nineteenth century it achieved a geographic spread which for extent had never been approached by any other faith or even by its own remarkable past. It contributed to the shaping of more cultures than ever it or any one religion had ever done. It continued to be an important force in Western civilization. For instance, it gave rise to the modern nursing profession, it was chiefly responsible for the abolition of the slave trade and of slavery in the British Empire and the United States, it stimulated the inception of many of the peace societies of the era, and it had much to do with the promotion of education, and especially of higher education on the frontier in the United States. It was prominent in the British dominions which were coming into being in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Its effects were very marked among non-Occidental peoples. In China it was creating the nursing profession and a new medical profession, it was contributing to the new education and the intellectual awakening of the land, and it was a major factor in the political revolution which began in 1911. In Africa it was pioneering in methods of education which would prepare the black folk for the irruption of the white man. It was assisting many of the Pacific Islanders to make their adjustment to the white man's world. The Near East, India, Japan and Korea felt its impact. In the nineteenth century it provided the impulse for reducing more languages to writing than had previously been given a written form since the dawn of history. In land after land Christianity was making for the emancipation of the human spirit.

Even in the past tragic three decades, marked as they have been by two World Wars and widespread revolution, Christianity has grown in its place in mankind. To be sure, it has suffered great numerical losses in Europe, but in vitality the churches on that continent are probably stronger than in 1914. Christianity is more nearly evenly distributed numerically than it has ever been. Its strength is still predominantly

among Occidental peoples, but the proportion of Christians in the population has doubled or more than doubled in Africa south of the Sahara, in India, in China and in the East Indies. In none of these areas do Christians constitute as yet as much as ten per cent of the population. In India, indeed, they are only about two per cent and in China barely one per cent of the whole. Yet these percentages are more than twice what they were in 1914.

Even more significantly, Christianity is becoming more deeply rooted among more peoples than ever before. Until 1914 the overwhelming majority of the churches which had been planted among non-Occidental peoples in the nineteenth century were controlled and financially supported by the churches of Europe and America. Since 1914 they are more and more producing their own leadership. They are progressively self-governing and are making strides toward self-support.

Then, too, the past three decades have witnessed remarkable advance toward knitting the churches of the various nations into a world-wide Christian fellowship. Unfortunately the gulf between Protestants and Roman Catholics has not been bridged, but in isolated but increasing instances these two greatest wings of the Church have been drawing together. The fashion in which in many localities in Europe, in face of the common peril of the Nazis, Roman Catholics and Protestants have co-operated, the way in which in a few mission fields, notably the Rhodesias, there has been a common fellowship, and the attempts at understanding in the United States through the National Conference of Christians and Jews, are distinct advances over any earlier age. It is, however, among Protestants that the past thirty years have witnessed the great achievements in creating a universal Christian fellowship. By its very nature Protestantism is the most fissiparous of the main branches of organized Christianity. Yet it is in Protestantism that the ecumenical movement has developed. It is taking many forms. To the World's Student Christian Federation, formed in 1895 and already strong in 1914, there have been added since the latter year the International Missionary Council, the World Conference on Faith and Order, the Universal Christian Conference for Life and Work, and, growing out of the last two, the World Council of Churches, already vigorous in spite of the fact that it is still in process of formation. These inclusive organizations cannot be fully appreciated unless they are seen against the background of many other movements toward Christian unity. Among the latter are unions of



ecclesiastical bodies such as the Church of Scotland, The Methodist Church and The United Church of Canada. They also embrace the world organizations of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, of the Sunday schools, and of several of the major communions. With them must be counted as well such national comprehensive organizations as the British Council of Churches and the several National Christian Councils, notably those of India and China.

Moreover, in these thirty years Christianity has exerted a greater influence upon mankind as a whole than at any earlier time. This statement seems preposterous. It appears to be belied by the wholesale open apostasy in much of Europe and the less spectacular drift away from the Church among large segments of the population in the British Isles. It seems also to be contradicted by the two World Wars of the period, both centering in what has traditionally been called Christendom, and by the palpable disintegration of much of Western civilization. Yet it can be substituted. In the Western world, among other achievements, Christianity has helped to keep alive the will to peace and has been partly, perhaps chiefly responsible for the impulse which brought into being the League of Nations and which is creating its successor, the international organization which is now coming to birth. Notable, too, has been the part of the churches in keeping vigorous the spiritual and moral life of millions in Europe and America during the stress of World War II. The voice of the churches in Great Britain on social reconstruction, the papal utterances on international peace and justice, the fashion in which the churches have been centers of resistance to Nazi domination in more than one country, and the many public statements by religious leaders in the United States of the principles which should govern the international order are among the indications that Christianity continues potent in the Occident. It is especially among non-Occidental peoples that the growth of the influence of Christianity has been marked. Until the last century the place of Christianity in shaping India and China, the two largest population groups in the non-Occidental world, was negligible. In the nineteenth century Christianity made itself increasingly felt in both countries. In the past three decades its effect has been mounting. In India Christianity has contributed to the remarkable stirrings among the sixty or more millions of the depressed classes and the associated yearnings and demands for greater opportunities for these underprivileged groups. It has made for growing literacy, physical cleanliness, and moral and

spiritual advance among hundreds of thousands of those who have been condemned by India's social structure to hereditary servitude and obloquy. It has had a part, although a minor part, in inspiring and shaping the ideals of Gandhi and through him has helped to mold all India. In China Christianity has had more influence than in India. The Chinese of the present century who has had the largest share in shaping the ideals and the government of China, Sun Yat-sen, was a Christian and obtained most of his formal education at the hands of Christians. In education, medicine, and social reform, Christian missions and Chinese Christians have been important. We must also recall the rising influence of Christianity in Africa south of the equator.

All this does not mean that Christianity is dominant, either in the Occident or outside the Occident. Palpably it is not. However, if mankind be viewed as a whole, Christianity is today more influential than it has ever been. It is gaining, not losing.

This record does not prove that Christianity is to be fully triumphant within the time span which men call history. Neither the New Testament nor the record of the past appears to warrant such a consummation. One of the parables of Jesus speaks of both the wheat and the tares growing until the harvest. It is a striking fact that as Christianity expands in geographic extent and in influence upon the human race some of the chronic ills of mankind, complete antitheses of Christianity, also mount in strength. Some evils have been overcome or have been lessened, chiefly because of the impulse given by the Christian faith. Among them are Negro slavery, illiteracy and several forms of superstition and disease. Yet others, notably excessive nationalism and war, have increased. The Christian is confident that within history progress can be registered. However, if he is true to the New Testament vision, he does not hope for complete perfection in history. In both these forecasts he can be in accord with the humanist of the type of Mr. Mumford. He can also agree that advance must be through the effort of men. However, he goes further than the humanist in insisting that this human effort at its best depends upon the redemptive grace of God. Quite beyond the vision of the humanist he has faith that outside history God's will is fully to be done and that the realization of the dream of the heavenly city outside the span of time is the gift of God. The holy city, the New Jerusalem, so the seer of the Apocalypse declared, comes down from God out of heaven.

# Biblical Interpretation Tomorrow

EMIL G. KRAELING

**B**IBLICAL interpretation is the oldest and most distinguished subject in Protestant theology. Firmly adhering to the position taken by Luther at the Diet of Worms and carried to its consequences at the Leipzig Disputation, the nascent Protestant churches made the Bible their palladium. In the classic words of the Lutheran Formula of Concord it is "the one rule and norm according to which all teachers should be weighed and judged." This naturally gave an enormous impetus to Scripture study. Strange to say, the churches following Calvin became churches of the Word even more than that following Luther. Luther had realized far more clearly than any other theologian of the Reformation era that not everything in the Bible, least of all in the Old Testament, was definitely authoritative for the Christian. He had not, however, succeeded in adjusting this insight to the other position that the Bible is the supreme authority. But the Lutheran theologians subsequently developed a formula that seemed to solve the difficulty—they differentiated between Scripture as the *formal principle* and the doctrine of justification by faith (out of which the Reformation had been born) as the *material principle*. Scripture was to be interpreted after the *analogy of faith*; i. e., the material principle was to govern the interpretation. Thus biblical statements were, if necessary, co-ordinated or brought into line with the basic Lutheran position. The Reformed wing of Protestantism, on the other hand, held fast to the authority of the Word without such qualification, but as a result reaped much splitting up into sects as this or that element of Scripture was emphasized by new groups of dissidents. Calvin's ascription of equal authority to the Old Testament (greatly in contrast to Luther) was productive of further ecclesiastical developments and complications. But through the whole of Protestantism there went, nevertheless, the general confession: the Bible is the Word of God.

In defining what was meant by the Bible as the Word of God, the Protestant theologians gave much attention to the doctrine of inspiration as it had been developed in Judaism and taken over by Catholicism. They proceeded along idealistic lines, asking themselves what qualities



a book that was to have ultimate authority should have and then ascribed them to the Bible. They regarded it as harmonious in itself, because the Holy Spirit could not contradict Himself in dictating God's word to man. They declared it perfect in every way—some even considering the Greek of the New Testament faultless—because God could not have handed down anything that was defective. Behind this imposing front of a doctrine about the Bible an exegesis full of harmonistic sophistry was carried forward. Such orthodoxy was naturally also accompanied by a line of worldly skepticism on the part of men who saw the impossibility of these positions, but that heresy hunting age discouraged open and public dissent. A document that seems fairly mild to us today, Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* had to appear anonymously and with a false place of publication, Hamburg instead of Amsterdam. The mere rumor of heresy was a dangerous thing to have attached to one's name in those days.

In the course of the eighteenth century the methods of biblical interpretation were greatly improved. This was due to the progress in philology and the development of new and surer methods in interpreting other ancient documents. The slogan *grammatical-historical* exegesis came up and the demand was voiced that the Bible be interpreted like any other book. In spite of the rule of orthodoxy, many realized that the orthodox position anent the Bible was hollowed out and untenable. But lip-service was still paid to it.

It is interesting to see how a man like Kant views biblical interpretation. He personally has no need for a Bible, but he knows that the public has been educated to regard it as authoritative and that therefore religious and moral instruction must operate with it. The interpretation of Scripture, Kant says in his treatise, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, is of two kinds—the learned variety which is only for the scholars and their students, and that given by moral reason whereby the writings are expounded in the sense of a practical faith for all men. In the spirit of this practical reason each passage of Scripture is to be explained in such a way that it is a proof or symbol of moral truth. It may be that this moral explanation is forced and arbitrary in comparison with the literal, but it must nevertheless be given the preference to any other. The literal interpretation belongs to the learned procedure—to historical criticism and philology which can contribute nothing to the improvement and redemption of man. One must not interpret morals

according to the Bible but the Bible according to morals. If, for example, God is asked in a biblical prayer to destroy His people's enemies, this actually refers to the enemies of the Jewish people. But that literal sense is contrary to morals. One should therefore reinterpret such a passage and give it a moral meaning by allegorizing the enemies and making them a figure for our own evil inclinations. When that sense is put into the Psalm we have a religious explanation. This moral method is arbitrary and without value from the point of view of scholarship but is necessary. Presupposing that religion exists in the form of faith in a book there is no other way out but to extract the truly religious faith (which for Kant is identical with morals) out of the book by such a method. This is *Als Ob* philosophy with a vengeance and shows the author viewing the human scene with mild amusement and proceeding to act after the manner of a statesman, governed by the motive of expediency.

The artificial situation here described could not endure. Had scholarship remained esoteric it might have lasted longer. But the democratization of learning and the attendant cessation of the habit of hiding one's ideas from the unlearned by writing in Latin, spread abroad the results of the new scholarly interpretation to an ever larger public. All the protests of the orthodox could not suppress the fact that the doctrine of the Bible as entertained in the orthodox theologies was untenable. America was the last stronghold of stubborn defense for such orthodoxy, and the heresy trials of men who had brought the newer ideas about the Bible from German universities sealed the fate of that sort of orthodoxy in intelligent circles.

When, a century ago, German biblical exegesis broke from all doctrinal restraints and applied to the Bible the new techniques that philology was developing, treating it with the same objectivity as any other set of ancient documents, the result was that the biblical writings were seen in a very different light. Here was a most complicated literary process, and as it became clarified the Bible was seen to be a compilation of divergent materials, diverse in their viewpoints and teachings. The exegesis of the individual unit became the prime objective. Thus we have an atomistically studied Bible. But what of the consequences? Where does this leave the cardinal Protestant doctrine of the authority of Scripture? It is obviously impossible to take any random passage from the Bible and treat it as authoritative—especially when it may be cancelled by passages pointing in a different direction. Furthermore, the Bible

as studied by the historical method is made increasingly remote. As we discern how it hangs together at every point with its own contemporary world and realize what a gulf separates us from that world, its relevance for us becomes increasingly difficult to discover. And so Protestantism is faced by the dire fact that doubt is cast on the validity of its starting point. A Roman Catholic might claim that history has vindicated the wisdom of the Catholic position of making the Church the interpreter of Scripture and thereby obtaining freedom from such uncertainty as besets Protestantism. But the Protestant will not yet be ready to concede that his basic principle is wrong (the more since the Roman Church cannot deny that authority ultimately reposes in Scripture, but merely vitiates that in practice by making the Church the authorized interpreter). The Protestant knows that if the Bible is once more consigned to a hierarchy we shall be delivered up to the bondage of superstition, regimentation and terrorization. The open Bible was the means of obtaining religious freedom; closing it will be the means of losing it. The Protestant feels that it is necessary to set forth the meaning of the Bible in a new way that will preserve and justify the basic Protestant position but which will surrender any mistaken views or procedures that crept in during or after the Reformation.

The crisis in biblical interpretation was for a long while only dimly realized in the churches, notably in this country, and where sensed chiefly provoked foolish polemic against modern critical scholarship. The latter has continued along its course undeterred, using the constantly refined methods being put at its disposal. In Germany, where the Church is more directly exposed to the immediate influences of a theology operating under secular aegis, the reaction of the churches has been for decades the cry for a different kind of exegesis that would serve to interpret the Bible in a manner in line with the living faith of the Church and yet be intellectually respectable. Several lines of thought and procedure have been projected or demonstrated which deserve attention on the part of churchmen and theologians as we become increasingly aware of the seriousness of the problem.

The issue was freshly brought to the fore by the late Professor Karl Girgensohn, of Leipzig, in the years 1922-25, in which he published a number of essays on this subject. He was a systematic-theological thinker and contributed notably to the study of the psychology of religion. His interest in this topic really evolved out of his book dealing with

Scripture proof in Protestant dogmatic theology.<sup>1</sup> In connection with that theme he had been impressed by the fact that the professional exegesis of Scripture as carried on today has become purely historical and no longer raises the question of the abiding, normative meaning of Scripture. To the extent that this is the case, biblical research is becoming increasingly useless for systematic theology, for though the theologian cannot be indifferent as to the original historical sense, he really is seeking for something normative for the present and for all time. Saint Paul's remark that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . but he that is spiritual judgeth all things" (I Corinthians 2: 14-15), suggests that there are two ways of interpreting Scripture. The historical-critical type of interpretation belongs to the horizon of the natural man. What is needed is a spiritual or pneumatic exegesis. The term was not new—it had been used, e. g., by the famous J. T. Beck, of Tübingen, half a century before. But churchmen, grown desperate because of the failure of modern exegesis to enlighten them on anything except antiquarian matters, hailed this demand of a responsible scholar with great joy. Girgensohn put his program into practice and conducted an exegetical seminar for his students, but unfortunately died before any specimens of his type of exegesis were published. From his discussions of the matter one can infer that he had no thought of disapproving of the historical-critical approach, but rather viewed it as needing to be supplemented by the pneumatic. He points out that there are four dangers which this new type of exegesis must avoid: (1) It must not get out of harmony with the historical-philological exegesis and become allegorizing. (2) It must not think of practical, homiletical values, though, since the aim is to find the timeless things in Scripture it will undoubtedly help preaching. (3) It must not be confused with philosophical exegesis, for while they may run parallel in long stretches, the approach is different; the philosopher will find his philosophy substantiated or illustrated in sections of Scripture, while the exegesis of the pneumatic type will avoid philosophical tie-ups and will be led by the insight growing out of appreciation and understanding of the spirit of Scripture. (4) It must not deteriorate into "enthusiasm" or inspirational talk, but be the fruit of real scholarly effort in which one receives the spirit of the object and then forms it anew. Girgensohn regarded this type of exegesis as belonging to the domain of systematic theology,

<sup>1</sup> *Der Schriftbeweis in der ev. Dogmatik einst und jetzt* (1914).

though willing to have biblical scholars join in it if they felt inclined to do so.

A flood of literature was elicited by this program, and many professional interpreters of Scripture had their say in connection with it. It was regrettable that Girgensohn had used the term "pneumatic." We cannot hope to revive Paul's terminology in this matter. The fear that this would lead to a theosophical use of Scripture was awakened by the use of this word, which would seem to have been relatively unimportant for Girgensohn's objective. What he sought was the discovery of the timeless element contained in Scripture. To extract it from its historical shell and transpose it to a higher plane was the thing he had in mind, and he desired it as a service to be done for systematic theology.

Meanwhile, in 1919, Barth's *Epistle to the Romans* had appeared. His slogan was "theological exegesis" and as the influence of his movement grew it crowded Girgensohn's "pneumatic exegesis" off the stage. To Barth's mind the exegesis of modern critics (including that of such conservatives as Theodor Zahn) is only the first primitive attempt at understanding Paul. The historical procedure, he thinks, is actually extraneous to theology. In a real understanding of the text little can remain of the merely historical and accidental facts and concepts of that ancient day. One must go beyond the mere words to the deeper underlying meaning. One must take the basic theme of which the text speaks and think it through. Barth is full of a theology which he uses as a key for understanding Paul, namely, Kierkegaard's idea of the qualitative difference between time and eternity. All who are in time are living in a permanent state of crisis with eternity. Seeing that theology as the great message, Barth reads Romans in the light of it. Here was exegesis in the grand manner, such as had not been seen since Luther and Calvin.

Hailed by the churchmen and multitudinous theological students, Barth, the exegete, did not meet with much approval on the part of the professional interpreters. One of the ablest of the latter group, Professor Ernst von Dobschütz, of Halle, wrote: "I cannot consider the exegesis of Karl Barth and the so-called dialectical theology to be the fulfillment of Girgensohn's demand. It is not a pneumatic apprehending of the deepest thoughts of Scripture, but a coercion of Scripture by dialectic artifices, a reading into it of foreign ideas, an abuse of interpretation. That must stand—no matter how much one may recognize the religious earnestness of Barth's thoughts. He is not an exegete." He expresses some



alarm at what will happen when others, who did not have as good a schooling in old-fashioned method as Barth, begin to proceed along such lines. The fear was not unfounded. In the years before 1939 there was a considerable amount of exegesis by persons influenced by Barthianism who tried to make the Bible or parts of it proclaim their theological viewpoints. Such exegesis was characterized by a certain disregard for historical accuracy and a tendency to incorporate the ideas and the high-sounding phrases of contemporary philosophy. It was obvious to some extent that ministers and students were listening more to these men than to the responsible biblical scholars with whose work they seemed dissatisfied. The Old Testament field had a particular attraction, perhaps because Barth upheld Calvin's view of it and because dissatisfaction with Old Testament exegesis has always been particularly prominent among churchmen.

The only prominent biblical scholar to yield to a certain amount of influence from the side of the dialectic theology was Professor Rudolf Bultmann, of Marburg. He does not regard the dialectic theology as identical with all the views of Barth. It is no set of doctrines but a way of thinking. In dialectic theology a statement is not true because it utters some timelessly valid truth but because it answers the questions of the concrete situation in which it was spoken. Bultmann thinks, furthermore, that we constantly becloud our understanding of the meaning of the biblical writers by our preconceived ideas of what is implied in words dealing with an angle of human existence such as those involving life and death, love and hate, sin and grace, good and evil. We must criticize our own understanding and the tradition in which we stand and thus clear many obstacles out of the way before we can get back to the meaning of the text. Our effort to interpret a writer must be guided by the question: what is his understanding of existence? Here Bultmann is obviously swayed by the new German existential philosophy which was greatly influenced by Kierkegaard and was represented by Jaspers and Heidegger. But unlike Barth, Bultmann does not consider it the function of exegesis to bring home to us a normative Word of God. For him the existential approach is merely enriching the historical approach and rendering it more keen and penetrating. Instead of delivering exegesis from the bondage of historicism, it would appear that Bultmann has only forged another link in it; for when we find out that an ancient author's understanding of existence differs from ours the author is rendered even more

remote. But one must await a demonstration of this method of exegesis from the pen of this able scholar before rendering final judgment.

But even those not prepared to yield to the influence of new theologies or philosophies could not fully escape the impact of the demand for something more than historical-critical exegesis. Another highly respected exegete, Professor Hans Windisch, of Leyden, in a book on the Sermon on the Mount,<sup>2</sup> after carrying through a purely historical interpretation, devotes a supplementary chapter to theological exegesis. He prefaces it with a discussion of the latter and its relation to historical exegesis. According to him the two are entirely separate functions. In historical exegesis the personal standpoint of the exegete is to play no role. Theological exegesis, however, he thinks, brings the Bible directly into the present and transposes its ideas into a particular modern belief or philosophy. Even so he does not fully identify it with what he calls a "frankly modernizing" interpretation, though he has some difficulty in keeping the two separate. In the end he defines theological exegesis as "the theological penetration and reworking of the biblical text with stronger or weaker modernistic elements." The theological exegete, he asserts, must bear in mind three fruits of historical-critical exegesis: (1) the way in which the words of the Bible are interwoven with the world view of antiquity and the historical situation; (2) the presence of considerable element of myth and legend (though this is conceded only in varying degrees); (3) the great divergence in the types of the Christian gospel found in the New Testament. The theological interpreter must first extract the biblical message out of a bygone situation and transpose it into the present. He must decide whether to extricate faith entirely from historical assertions. He must make up his mind whether to take one type of New Testament Christianity as normative and then interpret the others accordingly or whether to proceed eclectically or synthetically. Thus the task of theological exegesis is really far more complicated than that of historical exegesis. In his elaboration of the theological task, Windisch suggests that the exegete must carry the objective criticism of historical exegesis further and where necessary turn it against the ecclesiastical tradition. But he must also criticize Scripture itself and point out where it falls down from its usual height into ideas or thoughts which really are already overcome or transcended in principle, and inquire whether an author has carried through his position consistently. Finally the

<sup>2</sup> *Der Sinn der Bergpredigt* (1929).

exegete must apply this newly gained insight into the Bible to himself, the Church and the world. This, on the whole, veers more closely to what Girgensohn had in mind, though the practical demonstration of theological exegesis which Windisch then gives certainly would not have satisfied that theologian who was far more conservative in his Christianity than this extremely liberal New Testament scholar.

This account of some of the developments in the field of the problems of biblical interpretation, as they came to pass in the period between the two great wars, will suffice for the present purpose; viz., to make churchmen and biblical scholars in our country more aware of the fact that biblical exegesis as carried on in the historical-critical manner is extremely unsatisfactory from the angle of theology and the church, and to raise the question of what can be done about it. While historical study has been a source of great personal pleasure, I have always in my teaching suffered the sharpest pangs of conscience from the feeling that this pursuit was essentially secular and out-of-line with what the theological student and the Christian minister are looking for. The feeling, to which Paul alludes in I Corinthians 9:26 of "beating the air" in fighting, attended my efforts of conveying to students who were not really historically interested in the fruits of historical interpretation. Equally depressing is a survey of what the existing printed commentaries have to offer to the student and the minister—nothing but the husks of criticism, antiquarian information, and an occasional gleam of religious appreciation. The popular commentaries in the English language are in most cases of the random comment type; they quote a word or phrase from the Revised Version and make remarks about it. They are far inferior in interest to certain German commentaries that seek to serve both the scholar and the general reader by reproducing the biblical writer's thought in a connected manner and with psychological penetration of the substance. In fact, the stagnation in commentary production in the English language is proof of the fact that the demand is slight for the sort of thing that the market offers. But even the best German commentaries written by professional exegetes (the most recent ones showing a biblico-theological tinge) do not as yet fill the need of the Church and the churchman as Barth's was seemingly able to do.

Two facts stand out in any consideration of this subject: (1) The Bible can be studied from a variety of legitimate angles. (2) It is impossible to combine all angles in a single interpretation because there is



no way of looking at a thing from all sides at one time. Any oral or written commentary must accordingly limit itself to an approach from a single angle with the confluence of such related angles as can contribute to but will not disrupt the unity of the presentation. A historically oriented interpretation, i. e., one bent on getting at the life and the genuine atmosphere of the text in terms of its own time, must strive to find the angle most important to capturing that spirit. Historical psychology plays the final role in it. But the Bible is more than a collection of ancient documents. It is our only source of knowledge of God's revelation of Himself to man in a chapter of human history. It is this angle which is all-important to theology and the Church. To study the Bible with that in mind, and with the thought of attaining a clearer understanding of the divine revelation and of the place the particular writers or writings hold in relation to that revelation, as well as bringing home to us the meaning of any part of that revelation in relation to the whole, would appear to be an important part of the task of the interpretation of the future.

We referred in connection with Girgensohn to J. T. Beck's program of pneumatic exegesis. He started with the supposition that Scripture was an organic whole. At every point one must first determine "the individual physiognomy" of a document but then take the further step of seeking in it the traits of a messianic-theological character that lie hidden in it (owing to the relationship of each part of the totality of the scriptural revelation) and in this way discover its significance in the plan of the activity of the divine spirit. The chief fault with this program is the false idealization of Scripture inherent in it. It is going too far to imagine Scripture as an organic whole and to think that each part has been planned to serve a function like the pieces of a picture puzzle. Granted that in some way the Bible is divinely given, we cannot prescribe to God what sort of a Bible He must give. It lies within His sovereign right to give us a Bible lacking in unity and containing many a piece that is like the pebble incrust in the gold nugget—an impure element of little or no value. This may be His way of letting us know that we are not to place blind reliance on words, but must test them by reason, faith and conscience. Our faith is not a faith in a book but in God. If we put aside Beck's false idealism it seems to us that the theological exegesis of tomorrow will include much attention to the procedure he had in mind; viz., to see the "physiognomy" of the particular unit (in dependence on the results of the historical exegesis) from the angle of a theology of

revelation and then to assign to this unit its relative position (extremely negative judgments being possible in many instances) in the scheme of the whole.

The theological exegesis of tomorrow cannot be carried through without a theological standpoint. The problem is to find a standpoint that will be in full accord with the classic spirit of Protestantism and which will provide a master key that will unlock the doors to the separate compartments of the Bible. At the beginning of this paper we mentioned Lutheran orthodoxy's device of setting up a material principle (the doctrine of justification by faith) as a protection against abuse of the formal principle (the sole authority of Scripture). Insofar as this was used for harmonistic ends, to create a scriptural unity that actually does not exist, it is, of course, completely antiquated. But the material principle could conceivably be employed as a critical yardstick wherewith to measure Scripture. The value to be attached to any given section (the exact meaning of which can only be established by historical-critical effort) would be determined by the degree of its conformity with or nearness to this form of the New Testament gospel. The role that the doctrine of justification played in the Reformation and in the thought of early Protestantism gives it a particular weight. But here, too, it is necessary to extricate a timeless kernel from the shell of thought-forms belonging to a distant past. Paul spoke to a particular situation and to the extent that this was reduplicated in the Catholicism of their day he also spoke to the men of the days of the Reformation. It is a question, furthermore, whether the evolution that took place in the early Church from Pauline to Johannine Christianity, does not foreshadow a similar development in our own Protestantism, according to which our central standpoint would veer toward the theology represented by the Gospel and First Epistle of John. In any case it is clear that there are a variety of legitimate standpoints and that they deserve to be tried out and debated. No theology can endure very long that does not excel its rivals in giving us a better understanding of the Scriptures, and so biblical exegesis is the proving ground for systematic theology. We believe, therefore, that systematic theology must again take a greater interest in biblical interpretation for its own sake as well as for the sake of the Church.

# Ecumenical Outlook As Pulpit Guide

MERRILL R. ABBEY

**W**HEN a diffident youth introduced himself to Phillips Brooks as "the pastor of a little church in Iowa," Bishop Brooks replied, "My friend, there are no little churches in Christendom." A sure and creative pulpit ministry finds many of its most helpful guides in a reverent conception of the greatness of the Christian Church and an appreciation of the message in its relation to the world-wide historic fellowship through which God has worked.

Much has been said and written concerning the contribution of the ecumenical movement to world understanding and its effect on the weight of the Church's influence in dealing with matters of national and international morality. The values for theology which accrue from this growing solidarity of fellowship have been appraised. The new self-consciousness of the Church as a united world movement has lent strength to its work. But the ecumenical movement can reach also into every parish and enable the minister in his study to assess issues with a surer grasp and thus to undergird his pulpit ministry with insight and power.

In his lectures on preaching, Henry Ward Beecher made mighty use of two key words, "message" and "witness." Both are vital. Authentic preaching does not originate with the preacher, but is an objective message which he transmits. Yet it lacks persuasive influence unless it is validated by the sense of immediacy imparted by a firsthand witness. Regarding both message and witness an august sense of the Church will aid the preacher. For his message he is not confined to his own gleaning from a sacred book to which he comes as a solitary interpreter. His witness will set his own subjective experience in the context of a racial experience which corrects, amplifies and gives it power.

The ecumenical outlook will enable the minister to see, beyond churches, the Church; beyond the Scriptures the historic stream of faith and experience through which God revealed and continues to reveal Himself; beyond his own atomistic insights the larger thought and deeper tides of conviction resident in the age-old, world-wide fellowship. Such a belief in "the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints" can be so oriented to preaching as to render it concrete and specific service.

## I

This outlook is rich in suggestion concerning the preacher's own conception of his office and function. For some time there has been a hesitant and apologetic note in the Protestant pulpit, reflecting a lack of certainty as to who the preacher is in relation to God and the congregation. The Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all believers has made of the minister simply another layman with the added dignity of a frock coat. It has sometimes been assumed that the minister spoke for God; but with the assumption has gone an uneasy question as to how this man could presume thus to represent the mind of deity. By what authority and through what means did he attain his insight? Protestantism has not invested the minister with the institutional authority of a hierarchy on the one hand, and it has denied any special revelation through the pulpit on the other. Consequently the minister has been left without a clearly defined basis for his pulpit declarations.

Ecumenical theology comes to his rescue in this dilemma. In the light of the insight that doctrine is not divine revelation but the articulation of the Church's mind in receiving revelation, the minister, in exercising his teaching function, becomes one important means by which the mind of the Church finds utterance. Laying no claim to special revelation or to a mystical representation of deity, the minister finds in this position a root of authority as the current and local mouthpiece of the historic and universal Church.

Representing the Church, the minister does not speak his own subjective convictions. Rather it is his task to interpret the message central to the broad historic fellowship. A realization of this responsibility will save the minister from many of the pitfalls of an introspective message, will deliver the Church from a part of the danger of a merely subjective worship and from the cheapening of its public services by any yielding on the part of the pulpit to the temptation to exploit itself and to resort to the bizarre in an attempt to gain a popular following. As a representative of the Church, the minister is responsible in his every utterance.

Preaching so conceived is not so much a man speaking to the Church as it is the Church itself finding a voice. The historic Church may thus speak to the Church of the present. The Church universal may speak to the Church parochial. The prophetic function of the pulpit is best thought of in these terms, as the Church's broadest, truest self speaking to its narrow, more immediate self. The minister who thus understands

the prophetic function will be free from the sin of pride in exercising it. His utterance will take on the responsible quality of one who has made a serious and objective endeavor to understand the broadest and most deeply rooted tradition and message of the historic Christian community with regard to the particular issue to which he addresses himself.

The pulpit may also become the medium through which the Church speaks to the world. Perhaps this is the truest way to suggest the evangelistic function of the preacher. He is the mouthpiece of the Church calling upon the world to repent and believe the gospel and to take its place within the stream of the historic community through which God works.

Conceiving his pulpit ministry as the declaration of a message whose purpose is to deepen the sense of fellowship and strengthen the cohesive ties within the Church, the minister will find guidance concerning his method of approach to the problems in which his mind is at odds with the mind of his people. If a minister is a man who speaks for himself or a man who speaks for God to a people whose only function is to be receptive, he may speak in a tone of scolding or controversy. He may frame his message with a deliberate attempt to shock. If, on the other hand, the minister understands his task as that of giving utterance to the conviction and life of the Church through which God works, one of the guiding lights of his preaching must ever be the attempt so to treat his people that they may be more firmly welded together and that the sense of fellowship may be deepened among them. He will understand that incorrect ideas among his people are never as disastrous as broken fellowship. While the fellowship remains, the ideas may evolve toward truth. When the fellowship is broken all is lost. So the minister who believes the truth to be far in advance of his congregation will attempt to carry them step by step toward clearer understanding, with something of the wise patience employed by Jesus when He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." As Dr. Charles Clayton Morrison says in another context, "Ruthlessly to tear down the ideology may destroy the revelation itself, by causing the community which carries it to lose the mariner's compass by which it maintains its orientation toward God."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *What Is Christianity?* (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1940), pp. 60-61. For much of the basic conception of the Church that underlies this paper I am indebted to these Lyman Beecher Lectures by Doctor Morrison.

## II

This theology of the Church offers significant guides to the minister in the discovery of methods appropriate to his pulpit office. For one thing, it will dictate a firm and consistent adherence to the historic church year. Through the Christian year the message will find its most regular tie to the historic fellowship. By this means a message that is alert and contemporary can still follow a path redolent of the great tradition of the Christian gospel across the ages. Following the ecclesiastical year will keep the minister in harmony with the living fellowship of the ecumenical church, as he and his people thus make spiritual pilgrimage over the path of the same general concepts and experiences as their neighbors in other denominations and in other lands. Adherence to this historic Christian year, with its annual recapitulation of the great acts and events in which the life of the Christian community finds focus, will help the minister to keep his message rounded and complete. It will bind his message to a basis of historical concreteness and give it unity in diversity.

A theology of the Church will guide the minister to consider the sermon as an act of worship. To adapt an illustration from Kierkegaard, a congregation at worship may be considered after the analogy of a theatrical drama. What is the true way to understand the participants? One may think of the minister as the actor and God as the prompter, with the congregation as audience. Or one may consider the situation quite in the reverse, with the congregation as the actors, the minister as the prompter who helps them to find their lines, and God as the audience receiving their act. This is undoubtedly a higher way to understand worship. May it not also be true to consider worship as a situation in which the minister is the actor, with the congregation as prompters and God as audience? In such a situation the minister, not only at the altar in prayer but in the pulpit as well, is lifting to God a truth or conviction which is itself a corporate act of the people. Such an analogy must be followed with caution, but there are times when it is the truest conception of the sermon.

The sermon is an act of worship because it furnishes the channel for the meeting between God and a person. As such it enters the great tradition of worship traced in Isaiah's record of his meeting with God in the temple "in the year that King Uzziah died." The meeting may occur through an act of celebration in which a great truth is declared



with a sense of gratitude and awe. The sermon which challenges men to decisions of great moment in the light of Christian truth is a crucial meeting place of the divine and the human. This understanding of his task will deliver the minister from all that is harsh or secular and place him under a constant mandate to make his preaching not only personally persuasive but a work of as great beauty as he can produce at his best.

To the ecumenically minded no act or event held in isolation can stand as part of the revelation of God. To have significance as revelation, the act or event must be related to the ongoing process of history in a broad, organic sense. This insight throws important light upon the philosophy of preaching known as the "life-situation" or "project" method. A stigma of cheapness and triviality has sometimes accompanied this approach to the preaching ministry, largely because some self-styled "life-situation" preachers have had a surer hand in delineating the situation than in relating it to the ongoing historic process. The life-situation has validity in the Christian pulpit only when this relationship is effectively made. The minister who can take the local and immediate situation, laden with emotional tension or intellectual perplexity, and so relate it to the long experience of the broad community of historic Christianity as to illuminate its darker depths, renders a very great service to his people.

### III

A church-centered theology offers some significant pointers with regard to the frame and content of the pulpit message.

1. It articulates a demand for expository preaching. To the ecumenically minded the Scriptures cannot serve as a solitary locus of revelation. This conviction renders the pulpit a service, for the temper of this age is not one which will receive a message based on inferences from an authoritarian revelation embodied in a book. A part of the confusion of the pulpit has arisen from its loss of this basis for its message without the discovery of a new ground on which to stand. Where preaching has remained greatly effective, however, the preacher has made great use of the Scriptures, though without authoritarian presuppositions. This is not alone because the Scriptures are superlative spiritual classics. It is because through Scripture flows the central stream of the collective memory of the Christian Church, which cannot thrive without a living, informed contact with this integrating center of its consciousness.

Where the pulpit takes seriously a church-centered theology, ex-



pository preaching will consequently come into its own. It will be the more freshly alive because it is not forced to bridge the gap between the contemporary mind and a presupposition that the divine revelation is reposed in this book alone. It will be vital, earnest preaching because it finds in the book it expounds the normative expression of the truth and experience of the most creative epochs in the life of the fellowship through which God works. Such preaching is crucially significant, not only because of the proven resources of the Scriptures for meeting developing experience at the point of its emergent need, but because in the Scriptures themselves there is a common denominator of faith and life, emphasis on which is an effective aid in binding the fellowship together.

This calls the preacher to master a difficult art. Expository preaching is more than a running comment on an extended passage taken from the Bible, a series of remarks loosely held together by the tenuous thread of their common relation to respective parts of the same passage. It has a right to the name of preaching only by virtue of its purposeful integration around a compelling theme. The expository preacher who speaks to the heart of this age must diagnose a genuine current need of his people, relate the need to a validly relevant passage of Scripture, find the central meaning of the passage in significant human experience, and bring that meaning to bear on contemporary life. The disciplines of genuine expository preaching are endlessly demanding, but they are gloriously rewarding to the preacher who, taking his stand on the Scriptures as central to the mind and experience of Christendom, devotes himself to this task.

2. A church-centered theology demands not only expository preaching but also doctrinal preaching. Doctrine has been a fertile matrix of division, but it need not be so. Its divisiveness has come about as a result of an exaltation of doctrine beyond its rightful place. The conviction that the inclusive fellowship of the Church rather than any of its doctrines is the medium of divine revelation offers a safeguard against the pitfalls of this idolatry. Doctrine, as such, is not a divinely given revelation but the human response by which man attempts to receive and preserve the revelation. Seen in this light, doctrine falls into its rightful place, not as an end but as a vitally important means to communion with God in thought and in life. As instrumental it will not arrogate to itself finality and so become a factor in producing schism.

So conceived, doctrine and doctrinal preaching may serve as major

unifying centers for the Christian fellowship. As effective political movements rally around ideologies which unify the party, differentiate it from the general populace, and motivate its members, the Church must rally around doctrine, the ideological human act through which revelation is received and interpreted. The pulpit has as one of its major responsibilities the mandate to instruct congregations in the content, truth and living implications of Christian doctrine. In fulfilling this function the minister must endeavor to grasp the significance of the historic development of Christian thought within the Church, as well as the ecumenical mind as it is expressed in such major confessions of his own time as that formulated by the Edinburgh Conference on Faith and Order.

The emphasis, ever resident in ecumenical thought, on the necessity of concreteness in theology as over against the abstractions of philosophy, puts doctrine on the level of the pulpit, for concreteness is the essence of all good preaching. "The Church cannot explain itself in scientific or philosophical categories, because these destroy the ineffable character of the divine revelation, by translating it into abstractions. . . . The revelation is concrete, and the categories by which the Church explains the revelation must remain as closely within the realm of the concrete as it is possible for cognitive intelligence to do and still be cognitive. Such are the categories used throughout the New Testament."<sup>2</sup> And such, it may also be asserted, are the essential categories of the pulpit. It must speak to life in living terms. When it loses concreteness it loses its soul. This emphasis on the necessity of concreteness in doctrine is of great significance in making doctrine a staple of the pulpit.

3. A church-centered theology defines the minister's position relative to ethical preaching. Since the Christian revelation as mediated through the Church is itself ethical, and since the function of the pulpit is to give articulate utterance to the revelation as experienced in the Church, ethical issues lie directly in the path of the pulpit message. The minister is under mandate to discuss them without hesitation or apology.

But the most significant ethical issues are often controversial, and it is at this point that a church-centered theology will render the minister one of its greatest services. The call to be prophetic is one of the most confusing calls the minister will hear. When is he truly prophetic? When is the aggressive declaration of unpopular conviction a holy duty? At what point does it become a prideful arrogation to oneself of a wisdom

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 182.

and holiness beyond that of his Christian comrades? The minister must not desert the truth when it demands utterance; but on the other hand he must not confuse his subjective responses with the mind of God. To discern when courage is holy and when modesty is cowardice is one of the most difficult necessities of the Christian pulpit.

The minister who takes his stand as the mouthpiece of the Church will find light in these difficult choices. When the standard of the Church is clearly at issue with the standard of the world he will not hesitate to declare it with all his strength. In such a message he will speak with a prophetic "thus saith the Lord." There will be times, however, when the mind of the Church is not clear; when good men differ among themselves; when there is painful lack of unanimity among those of equal sincerity, intelligence and devotion. In such a situation the minister may have strong convictions about which he cannot keep silent. When he utters them, however, he will not confuse them with the voice of God. He will speak frankly as one voice among many. He will take his place not as one who expresses the mind of the Church or the revelation of divine truth, but as a sincere man joining in the process by which the Church so clarifies its mind and experience that it may receive the divine revelation. In such a position he will serve the Church without wounding it. He will not enter into controversy with the Church; he will stand as champion of the Church and its message in its controversy with the world. In determining his position on such questions, he must be a devoted student of such crystallizations of the ecumenical conscience as are found in the reports of the Oxford Conference on Life and Work.

4. In his evangelistic preaching the minister will find faithful guidance in a church-centered theology. The central message of the Church is evangelistic, and the pulpit which gives the Church voice *must* be. The evangelism of such a pulpit, however, will not be the arid intellectual challenge of ideology alone, nor the tenuous call to a mystical relation, nor yet the only partially definable invitation to a "way of life." It will embrace these elements but will go beyond them to issue in the winsomeness of a fellowship. Regardless of the theory held in the pulpit, the fellowship is determinative of the power of the evangelism, which is effective when the fellowship is warmhearted, and ineffective when it is not. It is empirically true that the basic evangelism is not achieved by the pulpit but by the fellowship. The pulpit articulates what lies implicit in the fellowship. From the time when Saul of Tarsus was won

by the witness of the martyred Stephen, the clarity of soul he found in those he persecuted, the warm response of Ananias and Barnabas and the circle of fellowship they welded about him, to the most recent experience of a secular-minded modern who finds in the fellowship of a metropolitan church a spirit and quality of life that awakens wistful inquiries within him, the Church itself has been vital in evangelism.

All this the minister must bear in mind as he approaches his evangelistic task. First: He cannot evangelize alone, but must build a fellowship winsome in quality and evangelistic in aim. Second: He must point his message constantly toward a verdict. A theme has not come to its full life as worthy of pulpit discussion until it has revealed to him an aspect which demands "Choose ye this day. . . ." Third: He must remember that the call is a call to the fellowship of those who serve the King of kings. It is not enough to secure commitment to the historical Jesus. The evangelistic task is not completed until the convert stands as a comrade in the midst of the Church as the fellowship of those who are being saved.

#### IV

When the pulpit conceives itself thus in the light of a church-centered theology, it will lose its hesitancy and find an assured and unassailable place. The minister, addressing the Church, will call upon his people to give ear, not with the embarrassment of one who says, "Come and hear me preach," but with the assurance of one who declares, "Here the Church comes to conscious utterance; here Christendom thinks together; here we love God with all our mind." Such an invitation, ever implicit in the bearing and preparation of the minister, will be the salvation of church attendance and a great aid to better worship in our pulpit-centered Protestant tradition. It will make preaching a sacramental act worthy of the great place which Protestantism has given it.

Addressing himself to the world, the minister will speak not with the bombast of one who declares, "This is what I, John Boanerges, believe," but with the modesty of one who knows himself to be but a voice crying in the wilderness, says, "Hear the message of the ageless fellowship through which God speaks." So the pulpit will find its way out of the attitude of "I think," which commands no respect and feels no dignity in itself, to the modern equivalent of the prophetic "Thus saith the Lord," an attitude which has the assurance of a *received* truth devoid of the arrogance of personal superiority.

# Religion in Higher Education

GEORGE F. THOMAS

## I

**A**mericans must make a crucial choice in the years that lie ahead, a choice between two different *conceptions of man*, his nature and his needs. The choice they make will determine the general character of higher education in America. What are the alternative conceptions between which they must choose? The answer is simple: they must choose between *a view of man which sees him wholly as a creature of his natural and social environment and one which sees him as related also to a spiritual order of being and value that is eternal*. It is one of the chief merits of a recent book on education by the English scholar, Sir Richard Livingstone,<sup>1</sup> that he stresses this as the crucial issue. Education in the natural sciences and the social studies has been reasonably thorough, he points out, but education in the ends and values of the spiritual life has been extremely poor.

It would be interesting to trace the causes which have led up to this situation. Perhaps it will suffice to say that the preoccupation of modern man with the scientific investigation of his natural environment and the mastery of it by technology has absorbed a larger measure of his intellectual effort than at any previous period in history. At the same time, the economic and political problems which have had to be solved have been so great that he has been forced to wrestle with them continuously. As a result of this concentration upon the natural and social environment, he has increasingly lost touch with his spiritual environment and neglected his own spiritual life. Religious division and philosophical disagreement with respect to ultimate reality and the place of the spirit in it have also contributed to this development. Either the spiritual element in human nature has been denied, or it has come to be thought of in naturalistic terms and thus has lost its distinctive character.

Among the results of this degradation of the spiritual to the level of a natural process, the spiritual values of truth and beauty and goodness are regarded by many as mere utilitarian means to personal happiness and social prosperity and solidarity. In losing their relation to an eternal

<sup>1</sup> *Education for a World Adrift* (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1943).

spiritual order, they have ceased to be felt as absolute demands laid upon all men. They are judged to be relative to time and place, and are even identified with subjective feelings or satisfactions of desire. It is no wonder that in secular democracies like our own, education with many has become little more than a means to individual happiness and success, as in totalitarian states it is a servant of national power and aggrandizement.

If this neglect of the spiritual life and degradation of spiritual values is to be arrested, the revival of the Humanities is essential. Livingstone points out that literature, history and philosophy are of primary importance in helping man to define his purposes and values. They reveal, each in its own way, the whole range of human thoughts, feelings and values as they have been expressed in imagination, action and speculation. From them we may understand the inner life of man, the dreams that have inspired him, the motives that have driven him to action, the theories that have given meaning to his life as a whole. Yet few schools and colleges insist upon a broad knowledge of the world's classics of literature or the history of Western civilization. Even the requirement of a year of English literature and a year of European history has been dropped by many colleges in recent years. The position of philosophy is still worse. It has ceased to be a required subject in most colleges, despite its great value for the critical examination of beliefs and the integration of specialized knowledge. Finally, it hardly needs to be said that for more than a generation the wealth of ideas and values offered by the literature, history and philosophy of classical antiquity has been almost unknown to the majority of students. As a result of this widespread indifference to the Humanities, ancient and modern, we are rapidly becoming a people possessed of an amazing knowledge of means and a woeful ignorance of the ends and purposes of human life.

But if the recovery of the Humanities is not accompanied by a return of religion<sup>2</sup> to its rightful place in education, the spiritual drouth in men's lives will not be broken. The study of the Humanities opens up to the student a vast treasure of human experience, but it provides him

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<sup>2</sup> The relation between the Humanities and Religion is a complex one. I am not assuming that Religion is not one of the Humanities, but only that it has a unique nature and place of its own which sets it apart in some respects from them so that it both is and is not one of the Humanities. Here I am speaking only of the unique element in it which sets it apart from subjects like literature and art, which are usually regarded as Humanities, and from philosophy and history, which are often considered as such. But it is equally true that Religion is one of the Humanities, insofar as it is concerned with man and his good, and it has some right to the proud title of Mother of the Humanities.



with no single key for its interpretation and evaluation. It enlarges the circle of his knowledge and interest, but it may leave him without a center. Thus, literature and history present a vast panorama of diverse human experiences and actions, good, bad and indifferent, but they provide no principles for the evaluation of them.

The case of philosophy is somewhat different, since philosophy aims at an understanding of the whole range of facts and values of experience by means of principles. For this reason, it is, as we have said, an indispensable means of criticism and integration. The practical difficulty is that, in actual fact, the principles of one philosopher differ from those of another and the world view of no philosopher is able to command the assent of all the others. The implication of this is important: philosophy, apart from religion, cannot provide a world view or an ethic which could serve as the basis of agreement in society. In addition, the appeal of philosophy is primarily to the intellect, and, while the will and feelings may be greatly affected by a philosophy which is embraced with conviction, the conversion of the will and the purification of the feelings is not the primary task of philosophy. Indeed, it is possible to maintain the purely critical, contemplative attitude of the spectator, refusing to commit oneself to any philosophy. It is, of course, true that philosophy at its best provides a world view and an ethic which have much in common with religion; and every effort should be made to restore the alliance that once existed between them. But the dominant tradition of modern philosophy is opposed to this, and it may be some time before the reign of naturalism and positivism in contemporary philosophy is over and philosophers realize once more that constructive philosophy and religious belief spring from a common root, and the health of each depends upon that of the other.

These limitations of literature, history and philosophy suggest by contrast two distinctive contributions of religion to education. On the one hand, it provides a principle of *integration* for the diverse facts and values of human experience. This principle is derived from a specific belief about the nature of ultimate reality and the good of human life. This belief, though it may seem very simple at first sight, has shown itself capable of illuminating all the complexity of existence with the help of a religious philosophy. Similarly, the vision of human good which is an integral part of it has shown itself capable of ordering all the values of life by means of a religious ethic and all the institutions of society by means of political principles derived from that ethic. But integration is only

one of its distinctive contributions. Since it is primarily a faith rather than a theory, it also challenges the will to *commitment* and enlists the feelings in devotion.

Thus, religion does for education what the Humanities alone cannot do, meeting two of the deepest needs of young men and women today: the need for a *world view* in terms of which every fact of experience can be given a definite meaning, and the need for an *absorbing purpose* in terms of which every act can be directed toward a definite end. There can be no doubt that the lack of such a world view and such a purpose is one of the main causes of the restlessness and even despair of countless men and women of the modern world, or that this lack must be overcome if our civilization is not to disintegrate.

## II

If the deep *need* for religion in education is once clearly recognized, the questions that are often asked about religious instruction will be found not too difficult to answer. These have to do chiefly with the *method* to be employed and with the *content* or subject matter to be taught.

First, then, what method or methods should be used in the teaching of religion? There are three distinct methods, each of which has its value. They may be called the "appreciative," the "descriptive" and the "philosophical" methods. The "appreciative" method is specially suitable for the study of religious literature, the "descriptive" method for the study of religious history, and the "philosophical" method for the study of religious problems, both theological and ethical.

It is obvious that more than one of these methods must often be used in a particular course. For example, the primary method in the study of the Bible or any other religious literature is the "appreciative," as we have said, but much "descriptive" analysis of historical situations and of literary matters such as date and authorship is also necessary for a full understanding of its meaning; and the "philosophical" method must be used in discussing the problems of belief and conduct raised by it. Again, the primary method in the study of Church History is obviously the "descriptive," but one cannot understand the spirit of a historical movement such as monasticism or the Reformation without entering sympathetically into the motives of the monks and the reformers by the "appreciative" method. Finally, the study of Christian ethics may be approached both historically and systematically so that the "descriptive" and the "philosophical" meth-

ods are both necessary. How are these methods to be defined and what are the advantages of each?

The "appreciative" method is the most fundamental of the methods in some respects. It may be defined as the method of sympathetic and imaginative identification with the experience of the biblical or other writer for the purpose of understanding and feeling it intuitively from within. For a religious experience or attitude must be not only grasped as a fact but appreciated as a value. To approach such an experience with the pure "objectivity" of the scientific observer is to approach it from the outside. One of the main reasons for the frequent lack of insight by secular anthropologists into the religion of primitive peoples is that they find it difficult or impossible to get inside the feelings of such peoples. A novelist may often have the imagination and sympathy to do this more effectively; e. g., Oliver La Farge in *The Laughing Boy*, a story of an Indian boy at the time of his initiation into the tribe. Again, everyone who has tried to teach the Bible knows how essential it is to help the student put himself into the historical situation and point of view of the Hebrews over two thousand years ago. If the teacher is unable to do so, he may give a creditable course in the *history* of the Hebrews (descriptive), or in the *thought* of the Hebrews (philosophical), but he will not give a course in the *religion* of the Hebrews.

Something similar is true of the teacher of a religious autobiography like Saint Augustine's *Confessions*, or George Fox's *Journal*, a devotional classic like *The Imitation of Christ*, or a religious poem like *Paradise Lost*, or *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*. In each case the "facts" can be presented by the "descriptive" method and the "ideas" can be evaluated by the "philosophical" method; but the "heart" of any religious classic, i. e., its meaning and value, can be known only by the use of the "appreciative" method which enables the reader to enter intuitively into the experience from within.

Moreover, the "appreciative" method has an intrinsic value which entitles it to a position of primacy. If it is judged to be important that the student should not only know facts and form opinions about the religion of others, but also have an experience of religion himself, the "appreciative" method is the most likely to attain this end. It exposes the student to religious experience as it has been enjoyed by creative religious geniuses and expressed in the concrete and moving language that is most suitable to it. It invites him to a similar experience himself, and chal-

lenges him to submit to the moral demands which arise out of that experience. And, even if he does not respond to the invitation and challenge at the time, it at least makes him aware that religion has been the source of life to many and may one day become the same to him.

The "descriptive" and "philosophical" methods may be treated more briefly, not because they are less important for their purposes, but because they are better understood in our time. The "descriptive" method is used in all scientific study of religious phenomena; e. g., in the psychology of religion, biblical criticism and the history of religion. The advantages of a careful and comprehensive study of the history of a religion for an understanding of its genius and power are not as well known as they should be. The full meaning of a religious insight like that of the fatherhood and love of God becomes clear only as it is gradually seen in its various aspects, relations and implications. Again, the study of the history of Christianity broadens the outlook of the Christian by making him aware of the insights and values of other churches than his own, and thus it promotes tolerance. Finally, such a study enables the Christian to understand better the present situation of his religion, the problems and dangers, as well as the opportunities confronting it, and the importance of his own decision for or against it.

The "philosophical" method involves the critical examination of beliefs in the light of all the available evidence in order to determine their validity and to order them in a coherent and comprehensive system of belief. It is in some cases the only method that is acceptable to the student, because often he will not accept beliefs, even in a tentative fashion, on the authority of Bible or Church. In other cases, scientific or other assumptions are cherished which prevent the student from examining religious beliefs with an open mind, and these assumptions must first be challenged philosophically. However, it is best used after the other two methods have helped the student to understand and appreciate the religious experience of mankind, since religious experience is one of the main sources of evidence for the beliefs he must examine.

Obviously, wherever possible, all three of these methods should be used together. In a course in Bible, for example, one must first be sure that the student understands the meaning of the story of creation and its relation to parallel stories such as the Babylonian myth of creation. But to this "descriptive" analysis must be brought an "appreciation" of the religious value of the story for the writer and for Hebrews and Christians

ever since. And the "philosophical" method must obviously be used in dealing with the apparent conflict of the story with the modern scientific account of the origin of species and the difficulties in the idea of creation itself. Similarly, any thorough study of Christian Ethics involves descriptive analysis of Jesus' ethic of love and of the various interpretations of it in the history of Christianity, sympathetic appreciation of the quality of life it implies, and philosophical evaluation of its claims along with those of rival ethical principles.

Religious people are sometimes impatient with teachers of religion because all of these three methods fall short of attaining what they regard as the only real goal of religious instruction, religious and moral *decision* or *commitment*. "All study of religion," they say, "is academic if it stops short of this goal. If religion is the source of life and joy to those who believe and practice it, how can the teacher be content merely to have his students *know* the facts about it or even *appreciate* its values and take seriously its world view? What is really important is that they should *accept* it and *live* by it."

Now, there is an important truth in this view and it will not do to dismiss it by saying that the classroom is for teaching and not for preaching. The line between teaching and preaching is difficult to draw. Some of the greatest preachers have also been great teachers, and the best teachers will often admit that they are incorrigible preachers of some theory or movement or cause. The line is peculiarly hard to draw in the case of religion. On the whole, the best teachers of religion are those who believe in it, as the best teachers of art and philosophy are those who care deeply about beauty and truth. Moreover, to insist upon a purely "objective" approach to religion in the classroom is to sacrifice what we have called the method of "appreciation" which is indispensable; and appreciation may be only a step removed from decision or commitment.

Therefore, we must say two things, it seems to me. On the one hand, the teacher of religion will and should hope that religion will come to mean something in the personal lives of his students. But, on the other hand, as a teacher he must scrupulously avoid imposing his own beliefs upon them, becoming irritated with those who do not agree with him, and treating all other beliefs than his own unsympathetically. He should not leave his religious convictions out of his teaching, but he should also respect the convictions or lack of convictions of others. The student can never understand fully what religion is unless he sooner or

later commits himself to it and tests it in his life, and the teacher may do much by his own personal example inside and outside the classroom to lead the student nearer to commitment. But he must respect the freedom of every student to make his own commitment in his own time. His function as a teacher is to see that the student attains a sympathetic and a critical understanding, so that his decision may be a wise one.

### III

We have now discussed the three methods of religious instruction. But we must also consider the *content* or course of study, especially as many may agree with us that religion should be taught and even *how* it should be taught, but may be uncertain about *what* should be taught. This is, of course, the crucial question in our day with respect to the problem of religion in education. It is impossible to deal with it adequately and I must limit myself to the most essential points.

For the fullest understanding of religion, of course, a study of the whole range of religious phenomena would be essential. For this reason, as well as to attain scientific impartiality, some institutions have emphasized comparative religion or the history of religions. They have usually combined this with an emphasis upon the philosophy of religion in order to aid the student to evaluate the claims of the various religions. In such institutions, biblical and other Christian literature is studied along with the literature of other religions; but great care is taken to avoid the danger of Christian bias in presenting it. Indeed, the assumption is often made in such institutions that every claim of a particular religion to uniqueness and finality is to be rejected or at least minimized, and even that all the various religions are products of human aspiration and imagination alone. The aim of religious instruction is likely to be what is sometimes called "the cultivation of the spiritual life" in general and its presuppositions those of a naturalistic or idealistic rather than a theistic philosophy.

Despite its merits, I believe this conception of the major content of religious instruction to be mistaken. It is, of course, true that every possible opportunity should be offered to study other religions than those of our Western civilization, and that they should be studied as sympathetically as possible. And the claim of any religion to possess a final revelation must not be accepted by any school or college without critical examination, much less be imposed upon a student who does not accept



that claim. Nevertheless, there are reasons for thinking that, in most cases, the primary emphasis should be put upon the religions which have most deeply influenced the Western world, Judaism and Christianity.

The reasons for this conclusion are many but I shall mention only three. First, the time for religious instruction in most schools and colleges is usually so limited that it is not practical to study the whole range of religious experience from primitive man to the present, or even all the major living religions. To attempt to do so is likely to lead to a superficial treatment of most, if not all, of the religions studied. It requires time and extensive reading to gain knowledge of the facts about a religion, especially one that is very different from one's own, and still more to appreciate its meaning and value. For this reason, the history of religions or comparative religion is likely to be studied from a textbook which tells us "all we need to know" about a great religion in a short chapter, with the aid of a little reading in one or two of the shorter classics of that religion. In addition, there is the practical difficulty of understanding the spirit of a religion through books alone, with no opportunity to attend its services of worship or to live among people who show its spirit in their lives. In any case, such a study in most cases should follow rather than precede study of the religious tradition with which one is already most familiar. If it does, it can be of great value in broadening the religious outlook of the student and helping him to understand by contrast the distinctive characteristics of his own religion.

Second, the study of the Judaeo-Christian tradition is valuable not only as a study of religion but also for the light it throws upon every major aspect of Western life and culture. This has been labored so much by apologists for Christian education in their attempts to persuade secularists that I hesitate to mention it; and in any case it should be too obvious to need more than a mention. A real understanding of the history of Western art, literature, philosophy, education, family life, political ideals and institutions, and even the science and technology upon which modern man prides himself is impossible without an understanding of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. For the genius of our religion is that it has not been content to determine man's relation to God as the eternal Source of existence and value, but has also sought to direct all his cultural activities and his social relationships in history. For example, modern democracy differs from Greek democracy in its view of the common man, of liberty and equality, and, above all, of fraternity; and much, if not all, of the difference is due to Christianity.

Third, and most important, the dominant religious tradition of the Western world, in its Jewish or its Christian form, offers the only "vital option" in religion to anyone who has been brought up in the Western world. It is true that a few Americans have become theosophists or have embraced some other religious philosophy influenced by Oriental religions. But the Synagogue and the Church are the only religious communities that make any real appeal to Americans and offer them any real opportunity for association with their fellows in a religious community. The schools and colleges should consider themselves the natural allies of these religious communities which are, along with the family, the most influential institutions for the inculcation of the moral and social attitudes necessary for civilized life. Our argument, however, does not depend upon this high estimate of the Synagogue or Church as an organized *community*. It assumes nothing more than the responsibility of the school or college to offer the student the best opportunity it can to make up his mind with respect to the one *religion* that is ever likely to appeal to him. It cannot, of course, take the place of the Synagogue or Church in opening up this opportunity to him. But it can offer a systematic study of the whole Judaeo-Christian tradition, directed by men and women who have been trained in the art of teaching, so that the student can make his religious decision in the most intelligent way.

One thing needs to be made clear, however, if my argument is not to be misunderstood. Primary emphasis upon the Judaeo-Christian tradition must not be interpreted to mean simply a course or courses in the Bible. In my opinion, the almost exclusive emphasis of schools and colleges of an earlier day upon the Bible in their religious instruction has been a grave mistake. The Bible is the fundamental classic and the fountainhead of our religious tradition, and every student should become acquainted with its great books and its central teachings. But the history of Christianity, its thought, its institutions, its effect upon the life of the world, its saints and leaders, its victories and defeats, its problems, and its social implications should also be studied as far as time permits. Courses in Christian Thought, Christian Devotional Classics, Christian Ethics and Contemporary Christianity, are not the exclusive possession of the seminary but have a place in the curriculum of a school or college. It is only as the student comes to understand our religious tradition *as a whole* that he can appreciate its formative power, its capacity to adapt itself to the needs of all sorts and conditions of men, and its remarkable vitality. Such an understanding will also liberate him from narrowly provincial

or denominational interpretations of Christianity and the Christian life. As he realizes that the unity of our tradition is a unity in diversity rather than a dead uniformity, he will be helped to attain a more tolerant attitude toward those whose belief or worship differs from his own.

There is one other possible misunderstanding of my argument which I should like to avoid. To argue for a *primary emphasis* upon the Judaeo-Christian tradition is not to argue that *nothing else* needs to be taught. I have already emphasized the value of a study of comparative religion for one who already understands his own religious tradition. Moreover, if the philosophical method is one of the most important methods for the study of religion, provision should be made at the college level for special courses, at once sympathetic and critical, in the philosophy of religion and in contemporary theological tendencies and movements. In short, a primary loyalty to the Judaeo-Christian tradition should in no way prevent us from seeking religious truth wherever it can be found.

#### IV

Finally, whatever may be thought about *what* should be taught and by what *method*, all who have thought much about religion in education are in agreement as to *who* should teach it. The answer is very simple: *everyone who teaches anything*. Those of us who have taught in departments of religion know all too well how limited is our success when our colleagues in other departments recognize no responsibility to deal with the religious aspects of their subjects. If religious faith throws light upon the significance of scientific discoveries or the solution of social problems, it is the scientist or social scientist who can most effectively bear witness to it. Why should not teachers of social science indicate the standards by which a community dominated by the law of love and service might determine its policies and build its institutions? Why should not teachers of literature show how the idealism of poets like Milton, Wordsworth and Shelley has been influenced by Christianity?

In short, why should not knowledge of every subject be taught not only for its own intrinsic value, but also for its bearing upon the Kingdom of God in the lives of men? Only when all knowledge is taught in the spirit and from the perspective of religious faith and love will the school or college fulfil its whole responsibility for religious instruction. Only then will education cease to foster pride and serve selfish purposes and become a worthy instrument of the Divine Will and the common good.

# Emily Again

JOSEPHINE YOUNG CASE

## I

**W**HEN Emily Dickinson died she made no disposition of her poems. Some of her papers she ordered her sister Lavinia to burn; but of her poems she said nothing: she left them in a box. Was she so careless of fame that their fate meant nothing to her, or was she so sure of their worth that she knew she need not worry? No one can answer with certainty. But from such records as we have it seems that the second alternative is the true one. Emily—for like a child or a queen she is always spoken of by her first name—cared for fame, but she was too shy, her poems too much a part of the living body which she hid from the world, to seek it in her lifetime. But if she wanted it to come after, she gave little thought to the means.

Left thus trustingly to chance, the poems have suffered a series of vicissitudes equaled by few sets of manuscripts in literary history; in the nearly sixty years since Emily's death several editions have appeared; but they have not yet been published in their entirety. This year's new volume, *Bolts of Melody*,<sup>1</sup> adds more than six hundred poems to the number in print; and there are still some unpublished. It has not been a matter, as Lavinia thought so long ago when she opened that box, of taking the manuscripts to the printer and saying, "Publish these." Emily wrote on odd scraps of paper, the backs of used envelopes and brown paper bags; she wrote across and sideways and upside down as well, in a handwriting like the tracks of a busy pheasant in the snow beneath a berry bush. Every poem before it could be printed needed not only copying but the final choice of alternative words, lines and even stanzas which Emily had left undecided. Confronted by this quantity of bits of paper, some tied together in little "volumes," many loose, scribbled over with whole poems, half poems, odd lines and even poems mixed together, any editor's heart might sink. But Emily was lucky.

No one could have been a more incompetent trustee of so valuable an estate than sister Lavinia Dickinson; a spinster only less out of this

<sup>1</sup> *Bolts of Melody*: New Poems of Emily Dickinson. Ed. by Mabel Loomis Todd and Millicent Todd Bingham (New York: Harper & Bros., 1945), pp. xxix-352. \$3.00.

world than Emily herself, but with far less ability and acumen. Devoted to Emily's memory, and eager for her fame, she nevertheless turned out in the end to be a grasping and treacherous old woman. But in the beginning she did one finally good thing; as inheritor of the mass of poems she asked Mabel Loomis Todd, their neighbor, a young faculty wife, to prepare them for publication. It was not her first idea; she had taken them after Emily's death to their sister-in-law, Sue Dickinson; but Sue did nothing about them, and after several years had gone by, Lavinia took them back again. This was a break for Emily; for Mrs. Todd was the best possible choice. A person of sensitive taste and persevering character, she was swept off her feet by the beauty of the poems, and dedicated a good portion of her life to their service. Emily's mentor, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, assisted Mrs. Todd in the choice of poems and in the details of publishing, but the bulk of the work was hers. It was a labor of love, for Lavinia, growing increasingly jealous as the years went by, was not generous with the profits. It is this story of the editing and publication of the poems which Mrs. Todd's daughter, Millicent Todd Bingham, tells in the present volume *Ancestors' Brocades*.<sup>2</sup>

It is a checkered tale; devotion and understanding are patterned with jealousy and the kind of bitter bickering which perhaps only a small New England town of the last century could produce. But it is a fascinating story, and Mrs. Bingham has presented it in thoroughly documented and fair-minded form. The death of the last surviving members of the Dickinson family has allowed her to state some of the facts about the volumes of Emily's poems and letters which appeared under the editorship of Martha Dickinson Bianchi, the daughter of Sue Dickinson. The fog of obscurity upon the whole Dickinson story is somewhat lifted; it will probably never be cleared. One feels, however, that with the publication of *Ancestors' Brocades* one knows the background sufficiently to understand the difficulties of editing and hence the state of the poems themselves. The last is, of course, the real and final reason for going into the story at all. But the problems and hazards and history of the poems must be understood to compare rival versions and to approach as closely as possible to what Emily meant to say.

The final work upon Emily's poems will be most probably a literary project of the twenty-first century. Even after all the manuscripts are

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<sup>2</sup> *Ancestors' Brocades: The Literary Début of Emily Dickinson* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1945), pp. xiii-464. \$3.75.

available, there will be a monumental task of sorting, comparing and judging. But for the moment we are much forwarder than we were. All admirers of Emily Dickinson—and among lovers of poetry who is not?—owe Mrs. Bingham a debt for her telling of her mother's story and the continuation of her mother's work of editing.

## II

When the first little volume was published by Mrs. Todd and Colonel Higginson in 1890, its readers were surprised almost beyond belief; shock is not too strong a word. The editors had foreseen this; the poems which they chose for the first volume were not "too queer," and had, in addition, been made here and there more conventional by the use of a regular rhyme or the straightening of a stanza. Such tampering with the poet's work seems treachery today. But it was done with the best of intentions; the editors wanted the poems to be read. Eyes and ears accustomed to the conventionalities of nineteenth-century poetry would be affronted by Emily's imperfect or suspended rhymes. Colonel Higginson, who was more eager for orthodoxy than his colleague, feared that Emily's strangeness would frighten her readers. It did. But there were many who, attracted almost against their will, honestly gave praise where it was due. The chapter upon the reception of the first book of poems is one of the most interesting in *Ancestors' Brocades*. The consensus among the severer critics was that the lady poet of Amherst had been a very queer specimen if not downright crazy; kinder reviewers wrote that it was a pity Miss Dickinson had had no knowledge of the ABC of writing verse, for some of her ideas and phrases were striking. But as a second and third volume appeared, and all the little books were reprinted again and again to meet the steady demand, Emily's poems gathered a great crowd of admirers, whose numbers and applause have not yet ceased to increase. Today we are in a far better position to appreciate the true quality of her work than her first readers of the nineties. But one almost envies the understanding lover of poetry, who in November of 1890 picked up at his bookseller's the new little book of poems published by Roberts of Boston—a graceful little gray and white volume stamped upon the cover with a design of Indian pipes in silver; surely when he opened it he felt what Emily described as her own reaction to poetry—"as if the top of my head were taken off."

Her most understanding biographer, George F. Whicher, calls her



"a precursor of the modern mind whom we have not yet fully overtaken." Certainly she does not speak strangely to us today. We are not concerned over her rhymes or meters. Far rougher word-clusters than any of Emily's are familiar to us as poems. We have come to appreciate her subtleties of sound and sense after a long experience of similar but less-accomplished verse. It is unthinkable that she should be the founder of a school; but her influence seeps through modern poetry like spring water through a dry wall. One only wishes, amid the frequent verbosity and stereotyped thinking of present-day poetry, that the influence of her exquisite apprehension of feeling, her concise thought and scrupulous expression had been greater.

### III

With other poets it is possible to assay their work, to separate the later from the earlier, the greater from the less, even the long from the short. But Emily's poems are like beads of amber upon a string. They vary one from another in color, in the way they reflect the light, but in general size and shape and feel they are much the same. Some, of course, are mere bits of a clear golden color, no more beautiful than a bead of yellow glass—but for the warm smoothness that true amber bears. Others are of so lambent a richness, with fire at the heart and sunshine at the rim, that one could look at them forever. Still others bear within a perfect thought forever crystallized, or mysterious bits of emerald seaweed as bright as hope. And there are those so dark, so misty and obscure, that they say nothing to us and we may only feel their silky burnish. It is only little by little that the reader finds his way among the poems; so large a collection as *Bolts of Melody* demands from the reader time and lapidary care.

It is often difficult, in Emily's work, to distinguish between late and early poems. Her handwriting, to be sure, was different at different times; but she rewrote poems, used the same poem in varying forms in different years, so that a just chronological arrangement would be difficult if not impossible to achieve. Mr. Whicher has marked sequences of poems which seem to develop thoughts and emotions one from another; and it is indeed important for any student of her work to read the poems with such cumulative development in mind. But as they are now published we must take them as they come, and the arrangement in the new volume, as in the old, by general subject, is a satisfactory one.

It is clear, however, that many of the new poems belong to Emily's best days. Some, to be sure, are like the few pencil strokes of an unfinished drawing. Some brief lines are but straws and serve only to show how the wind blew that day. And yet others are marred by the coyness, the too-extravagant conceit, into which her mischievous fancy sometimes drew her. But it seems to me that there are many in this book as fine as any we have yet seen, written on days when, for the moment triumphant over pain and doubt and disappointment, she looked beyond the hemlock hedge and saw the world true and clear.

I thought that nature was enough  
Till human nature came,  
But that the other did absorb  
As firmament a flame.

Of human nature just aware  
There added the divine  
Brief struggle for capacity.  
The power to contain

Is always as the contents,  
But give a giant room  
And you will lodge a giant  
And not a lesser man.

Among the group of unfinished poems, or lines which are only suggestions of poems, there are phrases for the memory:

Pausing against our palsied faces  
Time's decision shook.

And pictures for the heart:

The sun is reining to the west  
Makes not as much of sound  
As cart of man in road below  
Adroitly turning round.

That whiffletree of amethyst

. . . . .

#### IV

What is the secret of the continuing vitality of these small poems? Why do we receive with a shiver of delight a volume of new ones? I think it is because, in our clouded and difficult day, they speak to us directly, without pretense; freshly, without preamble. Though long study of the poems is rewarding, there is no book of modern times which offers

more to the brief glance than a volume of Emily Dickinson's poems. What she has to say is there before us on the page—any page—and we do not need to seek it through many lines and chapters. And although she was shy and retiring in her life, her spirit is as direct and frank as any today. This is not to say that her expression or her thought is always clear. But handling great ideas with abrupt metaphor, she startles us into perceiving almost in spite of ourselves something we might otherwise have missed.

They leave us with the Infinite.  
But He is not a man,  
His fingers are the size of fists,  
His fists, the size of men.

And whom He foundeth with His arm  
As Himmaleh shall stand,  
Gibraltar's everlasting shoe  
Poised lightly on his hand.

So trust Him, comrade! You for you,  
And I, for you and me.  
Eternity is ample,  
And quick enough, if true.

And again:

The mob within the heart  
Police cannot suppress.  
The riot given at the first  
Is authorized as peace,

Not certified of scene  
Or signified of sound,  
But growing like a hurricane  
In a congenial ground.

Her themes are ageless. They are indeed the themes of all poetry—life, love and death; but with Emily they wear less trappings of the period than in any other poet except perhaps the Greek lyricists. There is no room in a poem of Emily's, as there was none in the Greek, for anything except the bony structure of the idea; there is no costuming. It makes for pithy and satisfying reading. Her concern in her serious poems is with the human spirit and without fumbling she says so.

Life, to Emily, was fifty-six years of the big brick Dickinson house in Amherst, with its garden and the New England hills beyond; the small family circle, and a group of friends and relatives with whom she corresponded. Within this frame she lived, but her being was elsewhere,

everywhere. "She watched the motions of her mind," as Van Wyck Brooks says, and her mind and her heart taught her all that humanity can know and suffer. Her physical life may have been an escape, but her spiritual life was questioning, combat and acceptance. Whatever the true story of her attachments may be, she knew love's part in life as she knew death's. She fought through the sorrows of both and in her writing found the only relief she knew:

My wars are laid away in books.

As she felt herself part of the world of nature, at one with the sunset and the bee, she felt herself also, recluse as she was, a sharer in the pain and joy of mankind. The most individual voice in poetry, she spoke for all. Emily did not need to send to ask for whom the bell tolled; before it rang she knew.

# The Old Testament View of Man

J. PHILIP HYATT

**W**HAT IS MAN?" is one of the most important questions that can be asked. It is frequently raised today, and many are the answers being given. It is debated not only by theologians, as witness the numerous books and articles they are writing, but also by the common man himself.

The greatest factor in modern life which makes this question so acute is the global war in which we are engaged, and the tidal wave of evil accompanying it. Whether one be pacifist or nonpacifist, he cannot but admit that a war of the kind in which the world is now involved is the colossal example of "man's inhumanity to man." To the god Mars individual lives are cheap.

Many other factors in the present scene make our question important. There is no need here to discuss them, but some of the factors of greatest significance are the following: the vast enlargement of our physical cosmos, brought about by discoveries in astronomy and related fields; philosophical materialism which has in some instances been promoted by scientists if not by science itself; the theory of human evolution, with the accompanying realization that man has been on this planet a very long time; technical inventions and industrialization, which often make of the individual, if not a machine himself, at least only a "hand" operating a machine; and our ability and tendency to live in great masses in large cities. All of these make the individual man feel small and querulous concerning his own place in the divine scheme.

Man becomes a problem and a question mark to himself most often when things go wrong. When all goes well and he is experiencing prosperity, man does not often debate the question of his own value. He accepts his prosperity without too great concern for the future. But now many things are going wrong. The future is uncertain. Man is a great question mark to himself.

Our question was stated in classical form in the Eighth Psalm:

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,  
The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;  
What is man, that thou art mindful of him?  
And the son of man, that thou visitest him?

The answer of the Old Testament is remarkably healthy and realistic, escaping the Scylla of dark pessimism of such theologies as Calvinism (at least concerning man in his natural state), and the Charybdis of naïve optimism, found in humanism and some forms of liberal Protestantism. It is likewise an extremely important answer, forming the foundation for both the Christian and the Jewish faith relating to man.

But the Old Testament, we must be warned, does not give a single and systematic answer. The Hebrews were not consistent and systematic thinkers. Their religion was too vital for that. They could tolerate in their canon heretics like the author of the Book of Job, who was influenced, perhaps, by the pessimism of Arabic (possibly Edomitic) thought; and the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes, who was under the spell of Hellenic skepticism. We must beware of imposing upon the Old Testament an artificial uniformity. To do so is to be faithless to the dynamic character of Hebrew religion.

We must be warned, also, that Old Testament religion is never a man-centered faith, but always God-centered. The Hebrews always began with the prior fact of God. This is clearly shown by the way in which the Eighth Psalmist framed his question: "What is man, that *thou* art mindful of him?" He began and ended his psalm with praise to God:

O Jehovah, our Lord,  
How excellent is thy name in all the earth!

# I

Our question may mean, in the first place, "What is man in his individual make-up?" The Hebrew would hardly have asked this question first, but if we seek to answer it first we shall be in a better position to understand the Hebrew answer to the other forms of the question. This form is the one which inquires as to the "psychology" of man.

Old Testament writers had a "psychology," but it was not based upon extensive speculation or close analysis. It was based upon common-sense observation. It was objective and concrete, and synthetic rather than analytic. It recognized the great importance of the physical organism with which man is endowed, and came near to being behavioristic, without ever being truly materialistic.

The basic fact about Hebraic psychology is that man was usually thought of as a unity, made of two elements. One element was the physical body, composed of flesh or dust; the other element was the



vital principle which gave the body life, a breath-soul or blood-soul. Hebrew psychology was based upon a dichotomy, but not an ethical dualism. This can best be shown by discussion of the word *nefesh*, which is usually translated "soul" in English versions.

Passages are not wanting in which the *nefesh* is spoken of as if it were one of the elements of man, the essential, life-giving element, the seat particularly of the appetites and emotions. But the Hebrews thought of the *nefesh* most characteristically not as a constituent element within man, but as man in his totality.<sup>1</sup> This is most clearly stated in the early account of creation in the second chapter of Genesis, especially verse 7: "Jehovah God formed man of the dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living *nefesh*"—i. e., an animate being. In this passage *nefesh* is clearly not one of the elements of man, but man himself as a living being. As such he is composed of matter, "dust from the ground," plus the breath of life which comes to him directly from God.

The "soul" in Old Testament psychology, then, is not so much what an individual man *has* as what he *is*. Because of the associations which the word "soul" has come to have with us, due largely to Hellenic influence, it would be much better if we translated the Hebrew *nefesh* usually as "self," "living being," "total personality," "life," or the like. In many passages other words sometimes have the same force. The word *leb*, usually translated "heart," frequently refers to the seat of the intellectual and volitional life of man, and thus should be translated "mind" or "will," but in some instances it too refers to the self as a totality. Likewise, *ruach*, usually translatable as "spirit" as the source of strength, courage, energy, and the like, came to be the equivalent of *nefesh* as the total soul (but perhaps not until after the exile).

The "soul" of man as a totality finds its expression in many ways—in central organs of the body such as the heart, the liver, the kidneys and the bowels; but also in peripheral organs like the tongue, the ear and the eye. Any one of these may at a given moment express the "soul" in one of its various manifestations. The "soul" may also find its "extension" in the spoken word, especially in blessing or curse, in the name,

<sup>1</sup> This is especially emphasized in the work of J. Pedersen, *Israel, Its Life and Culture I-II* (London: H. Milford, 1926), pp. 99-181; for details and references, see C. A. Briggs in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, XVI (1897), 17-30; E. D. Burton in *American Journal of Theology*, XVIII (1914), 59-80; H. W. Robinson in *The People and the Book* (edited by A. S. Peake; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925), pp. 353-82; W. E. Staples in *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, XLIV (1928), pp. 145-76.

or even in one's property. These latter were apparently thought of by the Hebrews as having almost psychophysical existence.

Christian thought has usually conceived of man as an incarnated soul. This is due doubtless to Greek influences, particularly of Plato and the neo-Platonists. In the Old Testament, however, it is more accurate to say that man is thought of as an animated body. The Hebrews did not view the body as inherently corrupt and the source of evil. The body, or "flesh" as they usually called the visible element of man, was conceived rather as weak, subject to corruption. This is revealed in passages such as Isaiah 40:6-8; Psalms 78:39; 103:13-18, and others. The weakness of man's flesh is contrasted with the permanence and strength of God. Rather than being a source of despair for man, it is his reason for confidence in God's mercy and grace. Man should not seek to escape from the flesh, but rather that his whole "self" should be redeemed by God's grace.

This psychology of the Hebrews had far-reaching influence upon their religion. It had a deep effect, for example, upon their ideas concerning the future life. It is often asserted that the notion of immortality is not present in the Old Testament. This is erroneous, for it is found throughout the book. For most of the Old Testament period the Hebrews believed that everyone went to Sheol, a place like the Greek Hades. The inhabitants of this region are called *rephaim*, "weak ones," not disembodied souls, but animated bodies in a weak, ghostlike state. When ideas of the future life came under the influence of ethics, the Hebrews could only conceive of a resurrection of the whole body into a glorious state, a state which had been enjoyed by a very few chosen men who had been bodily translated to heaven without death.

It is perhaps worth pointing out that this tendency toward "whole-thinking" among the Hebrews has its counterpart in modern theories in psychology and medicine. Psychologists and physicians alike are coming more and more to see that man as such cannot be neatly analyzed into parts, but that he must be considered as a whole. This is a sane approach, when it avoids, as the Hebrews themselves succeeded in avoiding, pure materialism.

## II

Our question may mean, in the second place, "What is man in his social relations?" This is the sociological form of the question, and it is the point at which the Hebrews, as good Semites, would have begun.

They would not have understood the definition of religion made by Whitehead: "Religion is what man does with his solitariness." They could hardly think of man in a solitary state. He was always in a group. As Ludwig Köhler has said, "A single man is no man (*Ein Mensch ist kein Mensch*); man is man always in the midst of and as member of a group."<sup>2</sup>

It is almost axiomatic that primitive and early men thought in terms not of individualism but of social solidarity. The Hebrews owed some of their emphasis in this sphere to their early nomadic tribal life in the desert. In some ways they never got away from that. And yet, it is probably untrue to Hebraic ways of thinking to make a sharp distinction between "the individual" and "the community." H. Wheeler Robinson has given currency to the term "corporate personality" in defining Hebrew ways of thinking about the relations of group and individual. The group, whether family, clan or nation, was conceived as a corporate unity or a person, somewhat in the same manner that our law conceives of a business corporation. On the other hand, the individual member of a group was considered as being a representative of the whole.<sup>3</sup>

As an individual, the Hebrew wished to have intimate relationship with groups on both the horizontal and the vertical plane. On the horizontal plane, he was a member most intimately of a family or household, those with whom he was connected by ties of blood kinship. He was a member also of a large community, clan, tribe or nation. If we may judge from Arabic analogies, he thought of himself as having an artificial blood-tie with the clan or tribe. On the plane which I have called "vertical," he desired to have relationship with his ancestors and his descendants. Everyone wished to be "buried with his fathers" in the ancestral tomb, and thus to continue in the next life his corporate solidarity. Everyone also wished most earnestly to have children—especially male children—to carry on the family name and property. To be childless was a great curse, and institutions such as levirate marriage were designed to insure progeny.

### III

"What is man in his relation to God?" This is the religious form of our question, and the one in which we are most interested. It is also the one on which we can get most help from the Old Testament. While

<sup>2</sup> *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1936), p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> "The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality," *Werden und Wesen des Alten Testaments* (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1936), pp. 49-62.

its psychology and sociology are of interest, it is its religion which has the greatest relevance to our own situation.

At this point, as at others, we see the lack of uniformity in the Old Testament answer. We have noted above that the Hebrew canon could tolerate its "heretics." One of these was the author of the Book of Job. With all its profundity and insight, this book is hardly orthodox. The author makes Job give a very low estimate of man, either because it was his own view, or because it was in character for Job the sufferer. In 7:17 he seems to parody the words of the Eighth Psalm:

What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him,  
And that thou shouldest set thy mind upon him,  
And that thou shouldest visit him every morning,  
And try him every moment?

Elsewhere he says that "man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (5:7), and the poignantly sad fourteenth chapter is full of despair, asserting that man has not even as much hope as an inanimate tree.

The author of Ecclesiastes also had a low view of man. He believed that "man hath no pre-eminence above the beasts" (3:19), for both suffer the same fate. And among men "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong" (9:11). Koheleth's low view of man is in accord with his belief in God as a far-off deity, unconcerned with man's fate and fortunes.

These do not represent Old Testament thought at its best, and are not characteristic of Hebrew religion. The finest thought and true revelation are to be found especially in the accounts of man's creation in the first two chapters of Genesis and in the Eighth Psalm. In them we learn that man is not a worm, not born solely for trouble and sorrow, not an accident or afterthought of an unconcerned deity. Man is a creature of God, the crown and climax of His creation, made in the image of God, and only a little lower than God Himself.

Almost the whole of Old Testament teaching concerning man, as well as the history of Christian doctrine of man's nature, can be summed up in the term "image of God." The *Imago Dei* has played an outstanding role in Christian anthropology.

It is easier, however, to state that man was made in the image of God than it is to determine precisely what is meant by that statement. In seeking to determine what the author of the first chapter of Genesis meant by it we must be willing to turn our backs upon certain speculations

concerning it which have been offered by Christian theologians and try to understand the Hebrew writer on his own terms.

We can state categorically, I believe, that the Genesis writer did not mean that the image of God in man is his "reason," as has been asserted by many Catholic theologians. This is based upon Greek ideas of man, going back perhaps to Aristotle. It is not Hebraic. The Hebrews did not emphasize man's reasoning powers as the ground of his kinship to deity. The Hebrew language has no word which means "reason" directly, and no word for brain. (The word usually rendered "wisdom" can, in Job 28 and Proverbs 8, be translated "reason" in the same cosmic sense as the Greek *logos*.)

Protestant writers have often interpreted the image of God as consisting of the state of primeval innocence in which Adam was created but which was lost, or severely corrupted, in the fall. Calvin, for example, says it is "the uncorrupted excellence of human nature, which shone in Adam before his defection, but was afterwards so corrupted, and almost obliterated, that nothing remains from the ruin but what is confused, mutilated and defiled."<sup>4</sup> This interpretation overlooks the simple fact that in the ninth chapter of Genesis the image of God is referred to as something which man still possessed, even after the flood, in apparently uncorrupted form. God says to Noah: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" (Genesis 9:6). Both this passage and the opening chapter of Genesis are in the strand of Genesis known to scholars as the Priestly narrative. The third chapter is a part of J, a much earlier narrative. It is possible that the Priestly writers did not believe in the "fall" of man. At any rate, they did not believe the image of God was lost by Adam, but thought it was still possessed by his descendants; and they give no reason for thinking it was corrupted in later men.

If we must reject these two interpretations of the image of God, then we are likely to find a correct interpretation by giving close attention to the context in which the phrase appears. In the Old Testament, the phrase (or its equivalent) occurs only in Genesis 1:26f., 5:1 and 9:6. Only in the first chapter of Genesis have we sufficient material to form the basis of interpretation.

If we take only the immediate context, we must conclude that the "image of God" consists primarily in man's superiority over the animals

<sup>4</sup> *Institutes*, I, xv, 4.

and over inanimate nature. This is stressed in the second half of verse 26 and in verses 28-30. The Eighth Psalmist, who seems surely to have known Genesis, said that man was made "but little lower than God," and immediately spoke of his dominion over the other works of God's hands, specifying the various animals. Some recent writers on Old Testament theology have interpreted the image of God as this superiority of man over nonhuman nature,<sup>5</sup> and most include it in their interpretation.

We should not insist, however, upon interpreting the image of God in man only in terms of the immediate context, but in the larger context of the Priestly narrative. This narrative contains one of the most elevated views of God's nature in the whole Bible, being influenced by Second Isaiah and Job and coming comparatively late in Hebrew history. In this larger context, we must say that the image of God in man is his spiritual nature and personality. Man is composed of both body and spirit; God is spirit alone. It is spirit, then, which man shares with God; the late Priestly writers certainly did not think that God has physical form. To be sure, the Hebrews may have thought that spirit (*ruach*) is a refined type of matter, not an immaterial substance. H. W. Robinson even says that the creation of man in the image of God means that "the bodily form of man was made after the pattern of the bodily form of God (the substance being different)."<sup>6</sup>

Professor Ernst Sellin has said that man is made in the image of God because, like God, he is a living, spiritual personality, with the capacity of speech, thought, will, and the like; and with the possibility of being a "lord" over the animals and inanimate nature, as God is Lord of the world.<sup>7</sup> Another recent interpreter of Old Testament theology, W. Eichrodt, emphasizes man's self-consciousness and capacity for self-determination as being the most significant elements in his kinship with God.<sup>8</sup>

The Hebrew believed that man is a creature of God, the crown of His creation, with superiority over the nonhuman world. He is akin to God in his spiritual nature, and in this kinship "will" is perhaps more important than "thought." Man may be lord over the world in which he lives, but he is the servant of God, his Lord. He owes God voluntary obedience. The right relationship which should exist between man and

<sup>5</sup> For example, Köhler, *Op. cit.*, pp. 133f.

<sup>6</sup> In *The People and the Book*, edited by A. S. Peake (1925), p. 369.

<sup>7</sup> *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1936), p. 58.

<sup>8</sup> *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1939), II, 60-63.



God is best expressed by the Hebrew term *hesed*, a word often translated by "loving-kindness" or "mercy," but both are inadequate. The term really means filial loyalty and faithfulness to the covenant obligation existing between man and God. When man is loyal to God, then he is a faithful servant.

But the writers of the Old Testament knew that man is often disloyal to God, faithless to his spiritual kinship with God. In a word, he *sins*. Among the Hebrews the prophets in particular had a deep sense of the sinfulness of man, which grew out of their view of God as an ethical deity who requires righteousness rather than ritual. The prophets took a serious view of sin because they had a serious view of God. To them it was rebellion ("transgression") against the authority of God, arising from mistrust and a feeling of self-sufficiency and pride. Jeremiah, who probably had the deepest understanding among the prophets of the nature of sin, often attributed it to "stubbornness of the evil heart" (3:17; 7:24; 9:14, etc.). No meticulousness in ritual nor superficial repentance could suffice to atone for this rebellion, but only a repentance which touched the depths of the heart and motives. The prophets believed that the covenant mercy of God is available to those who turn to Him with such repentance, seeking to obey the divine will.

We began by saying that the Old Testament view of man is healthy and realistic. We may end by pointing out that it was saved from egoism by its emphasis upon the individual's place in society and his dependence on God; it was saved from naïve optimism by its deep sense of evil and sin; and it was saved from dark pessimism by its confidence in God and in man's ability to learn and obey the divine will.

# Liberal Concessions to Fundamentalism

HARVEY McARTHUR

**D**URING several years as a fellow traveler with the fundamentalists I suspected that they greatly misunderstood and underestimated the liberals. Further experience has confirmed this suspicion. Unfortunately after transferring to the liberal streamliner I discovered an equally sad fact. The average liberal minister's estimate of fundamentalism is similarly inadequate. After spending a number of years on the fairly well-insulated campus of a liberal seminary, the young enthusiast goes out with a perverted conception of the significance of fundamentalism. His attitude is patronizing, perhaps even scornful, or, at best, tolerant of a movement which he regards as an anachronism, a vestigial remnant soon to vanish.

This misconception is as dangerous to the liberal as it is unfair to the fundamentalist. The liberal who approaches fundamentalism in a more humble fashion will find himself well repaid. Probably his theology will not undergo much change, but his religious experience will be considerably broadened, and his understanding of the human need which calls fundamentalism into existence increased. Thus he will not only be in a position to appreciate the fundamentalist as fundamentalist, but will also have become a wiser counselor for the innumerable ordinary folk whose souls are the battleground for this age-old struggle.

Writing not as theologian or scholar, but as one who has had considerable personal experience, both with fundamentalists and nonfundamentalists, I wish to comment on three concessions which the liberal should make to fundamentalism. First: The liberal should concede the tremendous numerical and spiritual power of fundamentalism. Second: The liberal should concede that at least in externals fundamentalism is in line with historic Christianity. Third: The liberal should concede that the exclusivism of fundamentalism is consistent with its basic position.

## I

The liberal should concede the tremendous numerical and spiritual power of fundamentalism.

The fundamentalists are not a fringe minority living in the "Bible Belt" or attending the shoddy one-room churches in the slum sections

of our cities. They are a powerful, partially organized group, numbering in the millions, worshipping in thousands of churches, raising millions of dollars annually, supporting thousands of ministers and missionaries, maintaining dozens of "Bible Schools" which graduate hundreds of students each year, and conducting innumerable conferences and evangelistic campaigns in every part of the nation.

Statistics are difficult to obtain since fundamentalists are scattered through many organizations. Some are members of independent fundamentalist churches; others belong to churches in basically fundamentalist denominations such as the Church of the Nazarene, the Missouri Synod Lutherans, or the Assemblies of God; while still others remain within the long-established denominations despite their predominantly liberal leadership. Fundamentalist leaders have sometimes claimed that there are over ten million fundamentalists in the United States.

Ten million will not seem like a large estimate to those familiar with the rallies and conferences held by fundamentalists. During a two-year stay in a large New England city, I observed that when the regular churches combined for a mass meeting they were just able to fill the city's largest hall. During that same period various fundamentalist groups held rallies in that same hall and even without benefit of newspaper fanfare filled it to the rafters. Liberals whom I inveigled into attending these rallies were invariably dumbfounded at the crowds present.

On the other hand, some may insist that ten million is too small a figure. In reply it should be stated that this estimate refers only to fundamentalists in Protestant circles and, secondly, that it does not include the merely traditionally orthodox. Traditional orthodoxy, the orthodoxy of inertia, is wholly lacking in the religious fervor which hallmarks fundamentalism, and its representatives are as disconcerted as any liberal at the characteristic manifestations of the fundamentalists.

Numbers are an inadequate test of a movement's strength and significance. Fortunately other criteria are at hand. The extensive foreign missionary activity of the fundamentalists is one of the clearest tokens of their sincerity and devotion. Again precise figures are unobtainable, but on a rough approximation there are six thousand foreign missionaries supported by the fundamentalists in the United States. I am assuming that fundamentalist support of foreign missions is proportionate to the number of fundamentalist missionaries. The Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association of North America, a fellowship of the so-called

"faith missions," reports a total of 2,525 workers on the foreign field. Add to that the twenty-five hundred or more sent out by definitely fundamentalist denominations; and, finally, add the number of fundamentalists among the foreign missionaries sent out by the regular denominations. Surely the total will not fall far short of six thousand.

Or consider the "Bible Schools" which produce the leadership of the fundamentalist movement. Their entrance requirements may be low, their educational requirements inadequate, and their curricula limited. But on most of their campuses are some men of real ability, men who have studied in our finest educational institutions, and the training they give is intense, practical and consistent with the basic position of fundamentalism. There are approximately seventy-five of these "Bible Schools" in the United States. The Moody Bible Institute in Chicago graduates over two hundred and fifty students annually, while some of the small schools graduate less than half a dozen. But the total number of graduates in an average year must run close to two thousand. While many of these go to the foreign mission field, a substantial majority remain as earnest, zealous leaders in this country indicating that fundamentalism will not lack for leadership.

If any still doubt the numerical and spiritual strength of fundamentalism let him turn on the radio some Sunday and listen to the nation-wide broadcasts presenting fundamentalism. Let him listen to "The Detroit Bible Class," "The Lutheran Program," "The Voice of Prophecy," "The Old-fashioned Revival Hour," or "America Back to God," plus a host of local programs. These are not sponsored by some breakfast food company or soap manufacturer but are paid for by the dollars and dimes of earnest believers. Picture the hosts of people who listen to these programs and then recognize the significant role fundamentalism plays in the religious life of our nation.

A religious movement of ten million people, producing and supporting six thousand foreign missionaries, maintaining "Bible Schools" graduating two thousand students annually, and creating the nation-wide Sunday broadcasts—such a movement is not to be ignored or patronized.

The contrary-minded liberal may still reply that though the movement is large it consists primarily of the ignorant, the socially depressed, the emotionally unstable, the indigent and the spiritually inadequate. That many such are numbered among the fundamentalists is undoubtedly true but it is not clear why this should be to their discredit. Presumably

all accept the dictum, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." Presumably all seek to emulate the attitude of Jesus expressed in His words: "I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

It is indeed strange that we liberals who have championed society's outcasts in the name of the social gospel should scorn fundamentalism because of its following among the aforesaid outcasts. From a long-range point of view the ministry of fundamentalism may be inadequate, but apparently in the judgment of the needy themselves it is more effective than the liberal brands of Christianity offered them. This fact alone should make the true liberal humble rather than scornful or patronizingly tolerant of the powerful, widespread fundamentalist movement.

## II

The liberal should also concede that at least in externals fundamentalism is in line with historic Christianity.

This concession liberalism is exceedingly reluctant to make. In days gone-by churchmen attempted to shape their thinking in accordance with the authoritative pattern of the Scriptures. In liberal circles this authority has been transferred largely to the individual Christian conscience. Now the ancient process is reversed and churchmen may be seen busily shaping or interpreting Scripture according to their own thought and feeling. This has been especially true in connection with the person of Jesus.

The neo-Orthodox have had their fun scoffing at the humanitarian, social-reformer Jesus who emerged from the crucible of nineteenth-century liberal thought. But it is easier to scoff at the sinner than to avoid his sins, and even the most enthusiastic reader of Karl Barth's *Epistle to the Romans* must occasionally have felt the twinges of his exegetical conscience. This subjectivism in the interpretation of the Bible, this struggle to interpret the Bible in the light of our own times and needs, has frequently blinded us to the fact that whatever else may be in the Bible the fundamentals of the fundamentalist are clearly and explicitly there.

It is not claimed that the fundamentalists, as over against the neo-Orthodox of today or the liberals of yesterday and today, have grasped the "real meaning" of the New Testament message. The question of "real meaning," "the eternal significance," etc., is not at present under consideration. It is claimed that the fundamentals of fundamentalism, the structure of its system, the atmosphere it breathes—all these are akin

to those of the New Testament world. If the Apostle Paul were to attend a fundamentalist prophetic conference he would soon be engaged in violent controversy over the millennium question, but he would at least know he was among Christian brethren. If he appeared at a gathering of liberals he would be confused, possibly indignant, and might even imagine that he had returned to Mars' Hill.

To be more specific. The New Testament uses Scripture as something sacred and authoritative—a quotation silences all argument; the fundamentalists use Scripture in exactly the same way. The New Testament believes in direct divine intervention in the affairs of men as in miracles and prophecy; the fundamentalists are in agreement and appeal to miracles and prophecy in proof of the Scripture's authority and the deity of Jesus. The New Testament presents Jesus as a supernatural figure whose earthly life began and ended in miracle; the fundamentalists do likewise. The New Testament accepts the chronological dualism of "this present age" and "the age to come"; so do the fundamentalists. The New Testament presents Jesus as the Judge who will preside at the great assize ushering in "the age to come," and everlasting joy or tragedy depends on the individual's relation to Him; the fundamentalists proclaim the same message. The New Testament, at least the Johannine and Pauline sections, represent salvation as a mystical union with Jesus the cosmic Saviour; this is the salvation the fundamentalists offer. Surely further illustrations are unnecessary.

By challenging the historicity of John's Gospel and certain strata in the Synoptics, the liberal may rightfully claim that Jesus would not have subscribed to all the above concepts. But this does not refute the assertion that fundamentalism is in line with historic Christianity, since historic Christianity has accepted the historicity of John's Gospel as well as that of the Synoptics. Furthermore, even when criticism has done its best—or its worst—it is clear that Jesus' outlook on the world was closer to that of the fundamentalist than to that of the liberal. He believed in angels, in demons, in miracles, in the resurrection of the body, and in the catastrophic end of the age. Today only fundamentalists believe in such a world.

The liberal who still doubts that there is a gulf between his world and that of the New Testament is invited to sit down with his New Testament in his hand and to read slowly and thoughtfully from any of the Gospels for a period of fifteen minutes. At the end of that time he



will confess that though deeply impressed by what he calls the "message" of the Book, still the form in which it is presented and the concepts surrounding it are foreign to his world. The fundamentalist need not make such a confession since his world, at least in externals, is in line with that of the New Testament.

Admittedly it is the right way, nay, the obligation, of the liberal to reinterpret in the light of our modern world the doctrines which the New Testament proclaimed and which the fundamentalist now accepts with devoted literalness. But the liberal stultifies his own thinking if he deludes himself into believing that his reinterpretations are the original teachings of Jesus or the New Testament. He has departed from the original form of the teaching and must expect to be so charged by the fundamentalists.

Fundamentalism is in line with the creeds and doctrines of historic Christianity through the centuries. Admittedly no single line of orthodoxy can be drawn down through the history of Christian theology. But if all the weighty tomes of Catholics and Protestants, of Calvinists and Arminians, were gathered into one gigantic pile, and if an Olympian observer were asked whether fundamentalist or liberal literature belonged with that pile he would have no hesitation in rendering his decision. Unfortunately fundamentalism has jettisoned much of the metaphysical ballast which gave the traditional systems of theology their grandeur. It has lost their fusion of Greek and Hebrew thought. Scofield is not the equal of Aquinas or Calvin. But while the fundamentalists might disagree violently with many theologians of the past, they would be in agreement with them on the presuppositions and rules of the controversy. Between liberalism and most of these ancients there is no such common ground.

Liberals will do well to read and ponder the words of Kirsopp Lake: "No, the fundamentalist may be wrong; I think that he is. But it is we who have departed from the tradition, not he, and I am sorry for the fate of anyone who tries to argue with a fundamentalist on the basis of authority. The Bible and the *corpus theologicum* of the Church is on the fundamentalist side."<sup>1</sup>

### III

In the third place, the liberal should concede that the exclusivism of fundamentalism is consistent with its basic position.

<sup>1</sup> *The Religion of Yesterday and To-morrow* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1925), pp. 61f.

Few characteristics of the fundamentalist are more exasperating than his exclusivism. Not content with refusing to co-operate, he frequently denounces his liberal colleagues and their churches and reserves his special scorn for the lowest common denominator religious programs so dear to many hearts. According to the fundamentalist's understanding of history this is the day of the great apostacy within the organized Church. All the devotion and sacrifice of nonfundamentalists he regards as evil, or, at best, as futile. To him liberal ministers are not ambassadors of God but ambassadors, or possibly pawns, of the Evil One, leading the people down destruction's easy pathway and crying: "Peace! Peace!" when there is no peace.

The fundamentalist is the problem child of many a long-established denomination. He refuses to leave because he contends that he is true to the original principles on which the denomination was founded. He raises the hue and cry against liberal-minded members of the boards and agencies and will not be easily silenced. It is both tragic and comic to observe the outraged dignity of mildly liberal but strongly denominational leaders when their policies are brought under the fundamentalist fire. Edicts of toleration are of no avail, effusions on brotherly love go unheeded, and the normally smooth-functioning denominational machinery runs out of gear. Sometimes the troubled waters subside but the elements of storm remain.

Because liberals fail to concede that exclusivism is the consistent fundamentalist policy they frequently accuse their fundamentalist critics of bitterness and hatred when such charges are groundless. Some years ago I enjoyed the privilege of a slight acquaintance with the late Dr. J. Gresham Machen who was one of scholastic orthodoxy's brilliant defenders, but who, when the chips were down, aligned himself unhesitatingly with the fundamentalists. At that time Doctor Machen was engaged in a denominational squabble and the exchanges over the orthodoxy of certain church leaders ran about as follows:

Doctor Machen: "Dr. So-and-So, who occupies such-and-such a position in the councils of our denomination, in his writings clearly denies the virgin birth, the bodily resurrection of Jesus, and the substitutionary atonement."

The mixed chorus: "But Doctor Machen, surely you realize that Dr. So-and-So is one of our finest leaders and a man of splendid Christian character."

Doctor Machen: "That may be, but despite his ordination vows Dr. So-and-So clearly repudiates these and other doctrines which have been a part of historic Calvinism and evangelical Protestantism."

The mixed chorus: "But Doctor Machen, we're sure there must be some misunderstanding. Dr. So-and-So has made tremendous contributions to the spiritual life of our denomination."

Doctor Machen: "Gentlemen, I'm not prepared to judge that question. But let us get back to the point. Does Dr. So-and-So believe in the virgin birth, the bodily resurrection, and the substitutionary atonement?"

The mixed chorus, slowly and sadly: "Doctor Machen, you are a very bitter man."

The creedal denominations have the right to bring their creeds into conformity with liberal trends. Until they perform this delicate operation they must expect the fundamentalists to remain within the fold as a militant and critical group. The orthodox creeds give the fundamentalists solid ground on which to stand and, what is equally important, solid ground from which to attack those of liberal persuasion within the denomination. The major denominations will probably all experience this conflict; it may be postponed but it cannot be avoided. And so long as the creeds are on the side of the fundamentalists, the liberals can only attack their critics' motives without answering their arguments.

The average liberal is prevented by the character of his own thinking from realizing that militant exclusivism is the only policy consistent with fundamentalism. Fundamentalism, like Catholicism, denies its own genius when it recognizes opposing views as valid. The man who believes there is no hope of salvation apart from faith in the substitutionary atonement of the God-Man cannot possibly unite in religious activities in which that atonement is denied or ignored. To do so would be to become guilty of the blood of those led astray by this ersatz gospel. The liberal feels worthy of his name when he declares that his fundamentalist colleague is welcome to keep and proclaim his own beliefs, but is pained and surprised when that "colleague" refuses to leave him undisturbed in his belief or disbelief. In reality nothing else should be expected. If the liberal recognizes the fundamentalist's right to believe he keeps a deadly poison barreled in his cellar, he must also recognize the fundamentalist's logical right to protest violently when he drinks from that barrel or offers its contents to the passer-by. The liberal can afford to

be tolerant because even if he is right the fundamentalist is only partially wrong. The fundamentalist cannot afford to be tolerant because if he is right the liberal is totally and dangerously wrong.

To put the matter somewhat differently. The liberal is a theological relativist. To him all theologies are a reaching toward the eternal truth. He may feel that his views are nearer to that truth than those of the fundamentalist, but he believes the fundamentalist strives in the same direction. The fundamentalist, on the other hand, is a theological absolutist. To him only one theology is true; all others are false. Those who deny the essential tenets of his faith are not reaching after the truth but have deliberately rejected the truth, and, though he may look upon such men with love and concern, he must oppose them with all his might lest they drag others to destruction with themselves.

Or, to use a still different figure, the liberal is a theological symbolist. To him all theologies are symbols of the eternal truth. Every age has its own symbols, some adequate, others inadequate. He may regret that the fundamentalist clings stubbornly to the symbols of the first century but he recognizes the eternal truth these symbols represent. Therefore he calls his fundamentalist colleague "brother." But the fundamentalist is not a theological symbolist. To him theology is not the truth as it seems to a given age but the truth as it actually is. To him dogmas are not man's understanding of God's revelation but God's revelation in its purity. To him the Bible is not the record of man's growing consciousness of the seeking God, but the liberal, immutable revelation of that God unpolluted by human minds.

The significance of this radical difference between the fundamentalist and liberal views of theology cannot be overestimated. It is this and not the controversy over isolated doctrines that separates them. It is this difference that makes it possible—I say possible—for the liberal to be tolerant, but makes such a policy impossible for the fundamentalist. If, as the liberal contends, all roads—or at least many roads—lead to Rome, then their differences are not worth a life-and-death struggle. But if, as the fundamentalist holds, there is only one divinely appointed road, and all others lead to eternal destruction, then the differences are a matter of eternal life and eternal death, then the fundamentalist's refusal to compromise is not the result of malice or perversity but of consistency.

It would, of course, be idealizing the fundamentalist to claim that his attitude toward the liberal is always motivated solely by a desire for

consistency. Presumably traces of the "natural man" remain even in the most fundamental fundamentalist and sometimes the motivation for his exclusivism flows from that source. It is then not consistency but rather that egotism, bitterness of spirit, fanaticism and arrogance of which all are sometimes tragically guilty. With such exhibitions of our "all-too-human" nature we are not here concerned.

The fundamentalist naturally feels that his exclusivism is grounded in the New Testament as well as in logic. We may seek to soften Jesus' denunciation of the Pharisees, but as the record reads He was ruthless in His attack upon those who substituted the tradition of men for the commandment of God. In the eyes of the fundamentalist that is precisely what the liberal does with his reinterpretations of biblical dogma. The attitude of the Apostle Paul scarcely needs comment and is adequately summarized in the twice-repeated verse, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema." Clearly the New Testament repudiates any compromise with a false gospel. Since the fundamentalists identify their message with this gospel, they are scripturally justified in repudiating all those who proclaim a different message. We are not here concerned with the accuracy of their identification but with the consistency of their exclusivism after that identification has been made. It is the nonfundamentalist who is inconsistent when, after granting the fundamentalist's right to his absolutist belief, he protests if that fundamentalist challenges the validity of all other beliefs.

These then are three concessions liberals should make to fundamentalism: numerically and spiritually it is a significant movement; at least in externals it is in line with historic Christianity; and, finally, consistency dictates its policy of exclusivism.

Those who make these concessions will wish to study the movement closely and directly in the role of sympathetic observers. While repelled by certain of its features they will be impressed by its exaltation of a God who dwells in majesty beyond our own little worlds and systems, by its mystical longing for communion with that God, by its ethical zeal for personal purity and righteousness, and by its passion for the souls of broken and needy men. These are attitudes which those of us who call ourselves liberals may well covet. Let us not discourage them, but, for our own sakes and for the sake of the world, let us strive to translate them into the thinking and concepts of our own age.

## Canadian Complexities and the Canadian Church

J. R. P. SCLATER

CANADA is a large subject, physically at least. If you embark at the Clyde in Scotland, steam for four or five days across the Atlantic, and, after passing through the Straits of Belle Isle, sail on for two or three days more to Montreal, then, although you are more than one thousand miles inland from Halifax, you are still, so I have been told, thirteen miles short of halfway to Vancouver. In all these thousands of miles there are some twelve million people, dwelling in a Federation with a central government in Ottawa, but gathered into Provincial Units—nine in all—with Provincial Governments, possessing separate rights and powers, exceedingly jealously guarded, and developing Provincial prides and loyalties, and occasionally a kind of pity for each other, which is closely akin to scorn. The co-ordination of these differences into a political and social harmony at Ottawa must be a nightmare task. It is said that there was once a Canadian Prime Minister who complained that the churches did not pray for him enough; and nobody can blame him.

In this article, however, we have nothing to do with political problems. The writer is a Christian minister, who has lived and worked in Toronto for twenty-two years, and, owing to the kindness of his brethren, has had some unusual opportunities of seeing the country as a whole. Toronto is the headquarters of the larger Protestant churches. Its Archbishop is the Anglican Primate and the United and Presbyterian Churches have their head offices within its bounds, and, while the Baptists have, as yet, no nation-wide Union, the Secretary of The Baptist Union of Ontario and Quebec has his headquarters in the same city. Possibly this ecclesiastical congestion is part of the explanation why Toronto is so cordially (if superficially) detested by the citizens of other cities. You have only to listen to the undertones in the voice of a man from the Prairies—let us say—when he speaks of "Toronto the Good," to realize how much he loves it. The main reason no doubt is economic. Toronto represents Ontario, and Ontario, to the minds of the agrarian Provinces, represents manufacture, and manufacture represents wealth, and wealth



means power, especially in relation to tariffs. The farmer wants his implements cheap, naturally enough; but the manufacturer wants to make them for him, and, therefore, needs a barrier against American competition. This familiar clash of interests is particularly vivid in Canada.

The fact is that Canada goes one better than Gaul. "All Gaul," according to Caesar, "is divided into three parts"; but Canada is divided into four. First of all, there are the three Maritime Provinces, with their pride of history, their beauty, and their splendid people. Next to these comes the solid block of Quebec, French-speaking and Roman Catholic, with laws of its own and, what is more to the point, an outlook on life which is different, and which it holds to be less material and more spiritual than that to be found elsewhere—an opinion carefully fostered by its Church. Quebec is, of course, the Canadian political headache; and its existence is a solid ground for holding that Canada will never be absorbed by the States. It is not conceivable to imagine Quebec consenting to become a State in the Union, where its present legal, lingual and ecclesiastical privileges would be denied it; nor is it conceivable that Washington would ever want to take upon itself this particular burden of Ottawa. However, the point which we should emphasize, for the purpose of this article, is that it fences off, geographically, the mainly Protestant Maritimes from the mainly Protestant Ontario and Western Provinces. This is part of the headache of Toronto. The church leaders there, endeavoring to guide the affairs of a nation-wide Church, find that they are dealing, in the East, with a body of strong and competent people with views of their own, from whom they are separated by about five hundred miles of land which is inhabited by a people of other lips and minds.

When the eye turns westward, similar perplexities loom. Indeed, we might well say that a corresponding problem displays itself northwards; for in Northern Ontario is found our mining country, where Canada is so rich in resources, and whither so many of our adventurous and skillful young scientists are attracted. The difference in outlook between Northern and Southern Ontario has to be felt to be believed. Southern Ontario is as settled and solid as Westchester County, or as Dorsetshire in England, which it physically resembles. With its three universities in a range of two hundred miles, at Kingston, Toronto and Hamilton, its music and its art, it displays a civilization which has come to stay. Anybody coming out from Britain (as the present writer did)

finds himself in a spiritual atmosphere in which he is entirely at home. He discovers, to his delight, that he has only changed his sky, but not, after minor and superficial adjustments have been made, the place of his real dwelling. But Northern Ontario is a horse of another color. Here even "Caledonia, stern and wild" would have to enlarge its ideas of sternness and wildness. Above all, the suggestion of permanence is lacking: the bold spirits are forever seeking "fresh mines and workings new." The towns—or at least some of them—may continue for quite a while; but the atmosphere is that of a community which is prepared at any time to fold its tents and be on the march. Moreover (and I hope my northern friends will forgive me for saying it), the impression left on the mind of a visitor is that all good northerners expect, before they die, to retire to Toronto.

But let us turn our eyes to the west. There the geographical separation is a physical fact. Between the farming country and prosperous cities of Western Ontario and the beginning of those amazing prairies there lies a long stretch of rocky and uncultivable land, where centers of population will never exist. If there are five hundred miles of Quebec between Ontario and the Maritimes, there are not far from another five hundred of harsh country between Ontario and the three Prairie Provinces—provinces in which the material interests and social relations are of a completely different kind. The westerner lives, if ever a man did, in "a land of far distances," whose rich beauty is of another order altogether from that which is enjoyed by his neighbors east and west. He has to refocus his eyes when he comes to Ontario and, still more, when he goes to the Rockies. I remember meeting a young western farmer standing on the cliff edge above the Bow River at Banff. He was a splendid figure of a man, with a grave, strong face. For a while he stood in silence, staring at that famous view—one of the noblest in the world, surely. There was more than a touch of awe on his features and in his voice, when he turned and said: "Beauty, beauty. I never knew there was this kind of beauty in the world. But *I can't see it properly.*" Later on he told me that he had long purposed this trip and was glad to have been able to manage it at last; but that he was very content to be going home, adding, "there is beauty there, too: and it's my kind."

The fact is that the westerner is a westerner and would not be anything else. "*J'y suis, j'y reste*" is his motto. No retiring to Toronto for him; the gentlest emotion that city would inspire in his breast would

be compassion. If he felt it necessary to utter what to him is obvious, he would say that he had "a better way of life," and that he did not propose to exchange his heritage for any cramped mess of pottage that the dull East could provide. He might possibly consider Winnipeg, because Winnipeg is a civic island entirely surrounded by land, and from his window he still could gaze "beyond the sunset's purple rim," and because Winnipeg, being the gateway of the west, is of extreme political importance. But, for the most part, if he can be assured of a decent living, helped where the "acts of God" fall upon his farm and secured from too high prices for machinery and too low prices for grain, he will stay a landsman, "sleeping and eating with the earth," like Walt Whitman's "best people." He will rejoice in his mastery of the earth, which will take its kindly revenge by molding his thoughts, his desires and his character.

When we speak of a westerner, we think of the prairies. But Canada has a west beyond the west in British Columbia—beautifully situated on the sides of the sea and divided from the prairies by the great bastion of the Rockies. Here again is geographical separation in its most majestic form; and, even if there were not historical reasons for the development of a different type of mind, the physical features and the "far-offness" of that province would provide them in plenty. No one need be surprised that Englishmen gravitate toward Vancouver and Victoria, for they can find there so much to suggest what to them will always be "home." Even a seemingly amount of rain is provided; and, with a soft climate, the flowers and the fruits of the earth. Once, when sailing from Vancouver to Victoria, I seemed to be engulfed in a crowd solely composed of English lieutenant colonels. But British Columbia is much more than a lotus-land, where the weary are at rest. Its wonderful harbors alone (where would we have been without Esquimalt in the war?) point to a future of great significance, when Asia takes its new shape in days to come. Meantime, it is enough to emphasize that its position on the Pacific, with the Rockies behind it, tends to produce a mental type as different from the prairies as the prairies are from the East.

In addition to all this, there are the well-known perplexities due to different racial origins. It is true that British stock is still the largest (though it is proportionately falling) and that British and French together make up the main Canadian block. But all the European races have their representation, and some of the Asiatic peoples as well. In

parts of Canada race prejudice is quite lively. For instance, British Columbia is much perturbed about its Japanese subjects, and it would be glad to get rid of them. A Canadian consciousness is rapidly growing, but it is by no means fully developed. Legally, Canada is a self-governing people, with its own king, to whom, in common with the other dominions, it is manifestly loyal, as its actions in this war have proved; but its inhabitants by no means think in common. Many people of British stock would like it to be a Britain beyond the seas; the French people are concerned above all to retain their French and Roman Catholic culture, although they do not seem to have any special hankering after the European France of today. While the majority of all races aspire after a genuine Canadianism, they do not yet appear to be willing to pay the price which that achievement entails. "They say we should all be one and I agree. But the question is, which one? I say, my one." That attitude is still vigorous.

One other element in our diversities remains to be noted, for it greatly affects our mental and religious tone, and that is the steady, involuntary pressure of "Americanism." Our press, our cinemas, our radios breathe the American spirit into us. Our houses are less and less like British houses; our speech is colored by American terms of phrase; our magazines have to compete with American magazines and must largely copy their forms. It would be very difficult for a stranger arriving by air in Toronto to tell on which side of the line he had landed, unless he happened to see the flag on a public building. Our church life has not escaped that spiritual infiltration, except where it has been deliberately resisted by the retention of standards and forms of worship derived from the Old Country, especially by sections of the Presbyterians—both in the United Church and out of it—and by the Anglicans. This influence, by the way, tends to intensify the division between Quebec and the rest of the country. In Quebec nobody could imagine himself being anywhere but in Quebec—a fact due largely to the influence of Roman Catholicism. The last thing the bishops and priests want to see amongst their people is what they regard, rightly or wrongly, as the "American" standard of well-being. They judge it to be materialistic, and are concerned lest their flocks, glamorized by bigger and better bathrooms, should lose sight of spiritual values as they conceive them. At the present time, they are pressing the Government for the erection of radio stations in the prairies, which shall be controlled and operated

by themselves, with a view to inculcating their "way of life" as against that which is implicit (they hold) in the English broadcasts. They already can keep a careful eye and a firm hand on the French radio stations in Quebec. Thus, even the radio, which does much to unite us, in this instance may accentuate our differences.

Perhaps enough has been said to indicate some of the perplexities which perturb the churches of the Reformation. Religion, if it is Christian, should be the great uniting force; but in the case of Roman Catholics and Protestants it is the opposite in Canada, as, I fear, elsewhere. With us it is so interwoven with political differences, made acute by the war, that it is difficult to say how much is due to religion, how much to ecclesiasticism, and how much to economic and historic causes. But there is no question that in Protestant circles there is a growing impatience with what is regarded as priestly interference; and, on the Roman Catholic side, a growing tenacity in pressing what they hold to be their rights. It is permitted to wonder whether men of good will on both sides, sitting round a table and getting to know each other, might not allay much of the mutual suspicion: but of that there is little sign at present. With all these centrifugal forces at work, it is the obvious duty of statesmen to endeavor to develop the spirit of unity; and, therefore, it is not surprising to find them emphasizing Canadian nationalism within the British Commonwealth of Nations, and, considering the difficulties, they have made remarkable strides. The passing of the Statute of Westminster in 1926 made Canada, in common with the other Dominions, mistress in her own house, while her action in aligning herself with Britain when war broke out proved how strong and deep is her loyalty—a loyalty which the throne and the personalities of our King and Queen do much to foster. There is a delightful story, which is authentic, of a Britisher enquiring of a group of Canadians from the west, who were part of the first division from Canada overseas, why they were fighting. Was it for Britain? No. Was it for Canada? No, they didn't think so. Was it for their own province? No. Well, then, what was it? Whereupon a private from Saskatchewan piped up and said (with soldierly adjectives which I leave to the imagination), "I guess I'm fighting for the—Queen." That charming lady and our brave and honest King had been in Canada a short while before, and their reception then showed clearly enough for all to see, where, despite our differences, Canadian hearts are given.



Nevertheless, the creation of Canadian unity is an enterprise, and one of the anxieties of Christian people is to contribute to it. Unfortunately, as we have already noted, the separation of the Reformation, far from alleviating, accentuates our main division between French and English. But this makes it all the more essential that the Reformed churches should seek unity amongst themselves and act together on a nation-wide scale. Consequently, these churches have been, and are endeavoring in every way they can, to come into co-operative unity. A Canadian Council of Churches came into being last September, and has not only brought together by far the greater part of Canadian Protestant churches, but, by forming links with the American and British councils and by membership in the World Council, has brought the Canadian Church as a unit into larger relations. But we have to attempt closer unities than that. Twenty years ago a very significant step was taken in the organic union of the Congregationalist, Methodist and Presbyterian churches. As a minister and past-Moderator of the United Church I can bear witness to the effectiveness of that venture of faith. It has succeeded past our expectations; to see any denominational friction has required a microscope, if, indeed, it has existed at all; we have gained one from the other in power; and we say to any brethren elsewhere who are hovering on the brink of unity, "come on in, the water's fine." Unfortunately, however, about a third of our Presbyterian brethren did not see their way to enter the union, so that even these divisions of the Lord's people are not yet healed. Why so large a proportion has stayed out is a puzzle, and many explanations have been given. Personally, I think that we had here an exhibition of that underlying difference between those who desire a Britain beyond the seas and those who insist on Canada as a nation; but no doubt many other causes were effective. The healing of that breach will be a problem for the younger generation. Meantime, of course, personal friendships bridge the gulf, and co-operation is steadily increasing.

But we cannot be content to wait on time to draw all forces together. The future is far too serious for Christian forces to allow themselves to be dissipated in what sometimes is little better than competition. Consequently the idea of "combined operations" is taking hold of our minds. "Unity in diversity" is our aim. But that project presupposes two conditions—basic doctrinal agreement and a mutually acceptable ministry. The former of these presents no particular difficulty, for, as



between the larger denominations, it already exists—except in the one particular of baptism. Doubtless there are many who would deny this statement; nevertheless, when negotiators have gotten down to business, they have, in my own experience, found it true. But the second necessity—that of a mutually acceptable ministry—is in a different case; for even if it partially exists between the Conciliar churches, it does not exist between any of them and the Anglicans.

In September, 1943, the Church of England in Canada sent a formal invitation to other Christian Communions to meet with them to consider the whole question of reunion. To this the United Church at once responded, and, at a later date, the Presbyterian. I can only speak, of course, for the former; but I can say unreservedly that our meetings with our Anglican brethren have not only been pleasurable and profitable, but singularly unanimous. The late Doctor Temple of Canterbury has written that when representatives of different Communions come together, they should come "not as champions, but as learners." This we are trying to do, and, while our efforts are in the preliminary stages, we growingly believe that there is no inseparable bar to ministerial unity. Was it not an American soldier who said, "If a task is difficult it may take a week; if it is impossible, it takes a fortnight"? Well, building bridges between the Conciliar and Episcopal churches may take a "fortnight"; but in due course it can be done by men of good will.

The fact is that we in Canada are not satisfied that all is well in our ecclesiastical state of Denmark. Facts have come to our knowledge which have startled us out of any "torpor of foul tranquillity" into which we may have been inclined to fall. The Church of England in Canada and the United Church between them comprise from three quarters to four fifths of Canadian Protestantism. Moreover, we are the two Communions who are chiefly responsible for work on the frontier—those romantic, testing regions where so much Canadian courage and daring has been, and is being, displayed. If Canada is to be effectively won for Christ, these two Communions must pool their resources and act together far more than in the past. At any rate, we have discovered that we, working separately, are less efficient than we thought. The United Church shows a little more than 1,700,000 souls under its pastoral care. The Church of England in Canada, correspondingly, shows 875,000. But the census figures show something quite different. They declare that over 2,204,875 persons belong to the United Church, and 1,751,188

to the Anglicans. That is to say, between us, about 1,300,000 people say they belong to us, of whom we know nothing whatever! Indeed, the situation is worse than that, for the United Church figures include Newfoundland and the census does not. The net result is that twelve or thirteen per cent of the total population of Canada consists of "lapsed masses" of these two Communions. We are wondering how these figures will sound on the Day of Judgment.

Now this clearly means a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together. The one advantage of a sudden awareness of a serious situation is that it "stabs our spirits wide awake." Necessity is the mother of invention: need is the begetter of action: the tragic fact may be a spur. A prayer that we should all put up is to be delivered from "un-productive failure." If the failure that these figures indicate is un-productive of vigorous, Christian unity it will be failure indeed. Workers for unity should always keep their eyes fixed on "the unbearable thing"—to use Kagawa's phrase—in their community, until passion for its removal makes us cease to be "content among the little worths" of ecclesiastical complacency and pride.

Yet we must acknowledge that a generous anger at our squandering of men and resources and spiritual energy through our divisions is not enough. For our divisions are not mere airy things, with no substance in them, but have the blood and tears of history behind them, and, in addition, a great deal of imperfectly sanctified human nature. It used to be said of Browning that he changed his principles frequently, but that he kept his prejudices in their pristine vigor. A similar remark might be made of churchmen, whatever their label. Nor would we have it altogether otherwise, for our ecclesiastical prejudices grow out of our loyalties to the precious things of an olden time. A man's spiritual home, of which he can say "lo! I was born there" is not to be put lightly in the hands of renovators. Indeed, the renovation may be a disaster, if it offers him a new home in which he is spiritually uncomfortable. This is especially true of Canada, where our differing economic and commercial atmospheres call for differing religious expressions. To endeavor to standardize our worship into a liturgical form would be the wildest folly. On the frontiers, and indeed throughout the country as a whole, we have a majority of honest, simple people, who detest formality and love spontaneity, and above all want to make a joyful noise unto the Lord themselves. There is, by the way, a remarkable opportunity

awaiting the musical composer, who can give us good hymn tunes that are at once gay, reverent and melodious. Bach was not born in Western Canada and does not speak the native musical language of a people who are young and optimistic, greeting the unseen with a cheer. Nor was Cranmer. In time to come the matchless grace of the collects of the *Book of Common Prayer* may set a standard for our young ministers in leading their people in prayer—indeed, it already has a wide influence beyond the Anglican Communion, and the *Book of Common Order* (the worship manual of the United Church) is a catholic and dignified directory of which the most sensitive may be proud; but, at present, simplicity, directness and spontaneity are essentials of worship for a large proportion of Canadian Christians.

Hence, "diversity in unity" has to be our watchword. Any proposal for organic union with a church which emphasized liturgy would be open to the suspicion of a movement for standardization and would fail before it began. Even if successful, it would mean the increase of the evangelistic sects and all the religious emotional instability which that would involve. Therefore, we must seek a much looser connection, in which each Communion can be itself and give its own contribution, while possessing a mutually acceptable ministry and a common access to the Lord's Table, so that the ministry of each church can serve them all. Later on we may consider governmental systems, episcopal and presbyterian, and the like; meantime, one step, if it should prove feasible, enough for us.

Even that is far from easy, owing to the geographical factors. It is extremely difficult to keep the whole country going at the same pace. Inevitably, operating committees must largely be composed of men living near the center, if for no other reason than that of expense; and while these may be coming into closer understanding, our people elsewhere may hardly know what is going on. Moreover, the direction to be taken toward unity varies with the province. In one, from the point of view of the United Church, the most hopeful signs may point to relations with Presbyterians, in another with Anglicans, and in yet another with newer evangelical bodies. In some places, for all I know, the natural attraction may be between two or more of these Communions, with the United Church out of the picture temporarily. It is not easy for responsible men to secure the adoption of that which they believe to be the wisest course for the church as a whole, with the enthusiasm which is requisite.

In addition, due allowance has to be made for the fact that one Communion can move faster and more coherently than another. The Anglicans retain firmly the idea of episcopal authority, so that in one diocese co-operative unity may work smoothly, in another it may not, owing to the attitude of the bishops. So much is this the case, that it has been said that there are twenty-seven Anglican Communions in Canada, corresponding to the twenty-seven dioceses. This, of course, is hyperbole: nevertheless it is true that, in any movement for unity, the Anglicans must move slowly and cautiously, at the pace of the slowest ship in the convoy. The United Church, on the other hand, can move much more quickly, owing to its form of government and its close touch with its laity. This fact tends to occasional irritations at a time when the King's business requireth haste.

But, despite all this and much more that might be said, one fact is clear: Canada is determined on unity. In the larger political sphere, it has made great strides toward the achievement of that aim. The Churches of the Reformation are increasingly conscious of the part they can play in fostering that spirit; and, more than that, are rapidly awakening to their special opportunities for ecclesiastical adventure, and are responding to the urgency of the need of our outlying regions. At the present moment, the United Church alone could place approximately two hundred and fifty men in places where spiritual ministration is completely lacking; while we calculate that in at least six hundred settled rural communities we are senselessly competing with our brothers in Christ. The folly of it all has touched our spirits. The result is a new spirit of willingness to learn one of another, and together to learn of Christ. We mean to understand one another better, remembering Lord Grey's dictum that "those are more ready to understand, who feel that they are understood." Consequently the prospects for an advance in Christian unity are bright in this country. The atmosphere of aloofness is disappearing before the sunlight of mutual understanding and respect. For we have heard the prayer of Our Lord, and His purpose is stirring in our hearts, "that they may all be one . . . that the world may believe."

# New Testament Study and Theology

PAUL SCHUBERT

**I**T MAY be that the majority of Christian believers of the last half century has maintained a deeper feeling for the intimate relationship between New Testament study and Christian theology than have professional New Testament scholars, theologians and ministers.

The professionals knew enough to sense the difficult and far-reaching problems which arise when the question is asked what that relationship is. As soon as it is asked, it becomes inevitable that the two studies will separate. Thus New Testament study became a narrowly specialized discipline within the large realm of history, identifying itself in method and purpose with the study of general history. Correspondingly, theology came to consider itself as the architect of a Christian world view, sharing method (the sciences and philosophy) and subject matter (the universe) with all other scientific world views. Thus theology had less and less to do with the New Testament, and New Testament study less and less with the content of the Christian faith.

What is the nature and the extent of this conflict which in the early twentieth century resulted in a radical estrangement, and more recently in a new *rapprochement*.

## I

1. Both the historians of early Christianity and the Christian theologians as ardent disciples of veracity and science were honest in admitting the relativity and uncertainty of their final results. Numerous historians were perhaps less admirable in claiming that the origin and early history of Christianity exhibit a higher or lower degree of superiority when compared with the origin and history of other religions. But other historians, whose personal veracity and professional competence could in no wise be impugned, saw no such superiority. Some, like Edward Gibbon, Otto Seeck and Friedrich Nietzsche, saw in early Christianity nothing but folly and malice exploiting and annihilating the splendid achievements of Greek and Roman culture. Another group of historical experts saw no reason at all to raise the question of relative superiority or inferiority at any point in history. This is no doubt the proper attitude of a historian who claims that he goes about his work without presuppositions.

But such is the malice of history that no one can write even the most sterile history of a single decade without making value judgments before he lays hand to pen. Thus the "purely objective" historian is the worst of all sinners against history, since he must unknowingly and unwillingly do the very thing which he would not do knowingly and willingly.

However beset by unwitting obscurantism and every species of subjectivism the writing of history may be, it will never be given up. History itself, i. e., the experiences of men throughout the time sequences of the past, carries within itself the demand to be the object of scientific study. On the one hand, within historical times men's behavior and achievements, their dreams and deeds, their hopes, fears and desires, show themselves to be the same. On the other hand, every historical event, process or person has happened only once. The exalted Alexander the Great and his lowly contemporary Diogenes lived only once. The battle of Thermopylae was fought only once. Rome was once invaded by the Visigoths, another time by the Vandals; the second event was not a repetition of the first, nor was the first the cause of the second. The Visigoths were not the Vandals, and the Rome of A. D. 410 was not the Rome of 455. Thus all history is related, yet every moment in history is unique, that is, unrepeatabe. This is the grandeur of history and the secret of its abiding appeal for understanding.

Thus no amount of scholarly veracity and competence can erase the unique historical process of the origin and early development of Christianity from the record. No amount of ingenuity can deny that this process has profoundly affected the course of universal history since that time. No one can deny that it will continue so to influence the world for centuries to come, regardless of what may happen to today's Christianity tomorrow. New Testament scholars may at times have gone wrong as historians, but they may still come right, because they are dealing with solid facts which can be properly understood. They are not dealing with speculative ideas nor with bloodless abstractions. However fallible the historian, however difficult the critical analysis and evaluation of historical records, however complex the problems of understanding and expression may be, the historian of early Christianity must agree with the statement of the New Testament writer who said, "that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled . . . declare we unto you" (I John 1:1-3).



2. The theologians have no such concrete, certain facts to work and rely on. To be sure, in their search for truth, they roam throughout the ages of history. With the help of the laboratory, microscope and telescope, they explore the dimensions of "nature." They listen to the evidence of psychology and sociology, of logic, epistemology and metaphysics. Critical philosophical thought has often if not always had the glory of heralding and ushering in new cultures. The Aristotles precede the Alexanders, the Nietzsches precede the Hitlers. To abstract thought also belongs the guilt that cultures fall because it has no power to fulfil itself. The Hitlers always throttle free thought because it is no longer truly free.

The hope of ever settling the problems of the universe by a systematic world view is not even good common sense, even though it is a nearly universal illusory passion, shared equally by the wise and the foolish. The universe is not abstract thought nor is it anything to which abstract thought is the essential clue. Even a world view which makes every imaginable allowance for the dynamic aspect of human life and the universe is of little help. The philosophy of vitalism is a sure sign of a dying culture. Many forms of vitalism do indeed thrive on murder and death. Vitalism is a philosophy most congenial to and appropriate for those who are about to die.

Thus, while New Testament study is left at least with a concrete subject with which it can after a fashion console and enjoy itself in playful though subtly scientific relationships, theology in its peregrinations through arid and sterile areas, was bound sooner or later to rediscover the New Testament. The last two decades have brought forth energetic, not to say desperate efforts to undo the ill effects brought about by a long and deep estrangement.

3. In the early twenties this movement erupted with particular force in Germany. No wonder, since there the estrangement between liberal historians and liberal theologians had been carried to brilliant extremes. The reaction was furthered by the fact that there the "conservative" theological school had also maintained a vigorous life, to which the names of Schlatter, Zahn, H. E. Weber and others bear substantial witness. A further signpost pointing German theologians to the New Testament as the "Word of God" was Luther who remains throughout all changes the one *conditio sine qua non* of all German Protestant theologians. He is the patron saint of Germany's existential theologians, of her liberals, and of her conservatives. This may indeed be a true sign of Luther's

greatness, since German theologians of all schools are fearless iconoclasts, yet there is no modern German theologian of importance who has not claimed Luther as his own personal property. If Luther's greatness may be thus assumed, it speaks ill of every particular school of contemporary Luther worshipers. It might indeed be well for German theology—and for Luther's memory—if German theology would make up its mind to honor him by leaving him severely alone and go directly to the sources—the New Testament—to which he wanted but to be a signpost. He never claimed to be the authoritative interpreter of the "Word of God." Resort to Luther's authority is contrary to Luther's genius.

Again it is significant that the new *rapprochement* was initiated by such men as Barth, Thurneysen, Gogarten and Brunner—all of them approaching the New Testament as theologians, not as historians. They have little use for historians and for history; historians on the whole have little use for them. In the early twenties this thorough and entirely objective contempt for each other was the only thing dialectic theologians and historians of the New Testament had in common.

4. The separation between the historical approach to the New Testament and the scientific philosophical approach to theology was by no means confined to Germany. In the United States this separation was—and by and large still is—well understood and emphatic. Here, within the fold of liberalism, it was definitely a case of amicable separation, with no recriminations and no claims. The separated parties no longer lived together, but they remained on polite speaking terms, without having anything to say to each other except that the weather was fine. No respectable New Testament scholar would think of writing, even from the historical point of view, a theology of the New Testament. E. W. Parsons wrote *The Religion of the New Testament* (1939). The chief value of this book is that it presented in the most cordial and conciliatory terms uncontested proof that there is no such thing as a New Testament theology and that the New Testament has to offer us nothing more than "inspiring interpretations, starting points from which we, in deep and grateful appreciation of the past, must make our own essays in religious understanding and achievement" (see pp. 265f., 116-18; also p. 2). The systematic theologians of the liberal school were equally polite to Jesus and the New Testament, and incorporated in their world views with conscious generosity much or little from their critical study of Jesus which would fit the picture of a twentieth-century democratic gentleman, an inspiring teacher of up-to-date ethics and an earnest social reformer.

Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Troeltsch, William James, Dewey and American fair play produced these ethereally beautiful christologies of such theologians as Shailer Matthews and G. B. Smith. They are still being "preached" in thousands of churches in our country today.

The reaction came here a decade later than in Germany. It rallied around Reinhold Niebuhr, whose influence on the younger theologians and ministers of our country is quite as large as is that of the dialectic theologians in Europe. To be sure, Barthianism had something to do with Niebuhrianism, but the former is not the father of the latter. Barth made his first contribution through a theological-philosophical-dogmatic interpretation of one of the most important writings of the New Testament, Paul's letter to the Romans.<sup>1</sup> Barth approaches the New Testament from the viewpoint of a theology which arose outside the New Testament, as a product of the nineteenth century, especially of Kierkegaard. This fact is important but it does not pronounce for or against the right of this approach. Barth and his various followers, however significantly the latter may differ from him, all share this basic approach, the tradition of existential theology. It is a typically German intellectualistic approach, even though this time, in Brunner's phrase, the particular theology is "antirational."<sup>2</sup> The procedure is antirational insofar as all "objective" rational epistemologies are rationally refuted as invalid, and thereby the true position is rationally defined as antirational in man's existence.

Reinhold Niebuhr made his first and basic contribution by an analysis of man's ethical dilemma as a social being in *Moral Man and Immoral Society*,<sup>3</sup> and was led from this practical dialectic to a theological one similar to Barth's, and to the New Testament; i. e., to the formulation of a "biblical theology" which characteristically draws its chief materials from the Old Testament prophets, the Synoptic Gospels, and the letters of Paul. It furnishes the basis of Niebuhr's *magnum opus*, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (1941-43). This difference between Barth and Niebuhr is important in two ways. First, it points up the radically different German and American points of view, the difference in emphasis on reason versus action, theory versus practice, epistemology versus ethics,

<sup>1</sup> First published as *Der Römerbrief* (Munich, 1918), the English translation *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), is made from the sixth German edition.

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophie und Offenbarung* (Tübingen, 1925).

<sup>3</sup> New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1932. Niebuhr's early works aim at an ethical rather than a theological revolution.

mind versus will. Second, the difference reveals the essentially independent and indigenous nature of both Niebuhrianism and Barthianism. That there is a large area of common ground—an old-new biblical theology and an existential philosophy—is an impressive fact which should give pause to those who condemn existential theology and philosophy wholesale because they are satisfied that their own beliefs are the truth. Existential thought is part of the woof and web of modern philosophy, poetry, historiography, political, social and economic theory since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Until recently students of philosophy heard little about it because it was a suppressed but brilliant minority report of history. To the existential theologians their own history should give pause. The more radical among them show no more understanding and respect for their own history than they do for history in general. That it is one of the major duties of a disciple of existential theology to “soak himself with Kierkegaard” is no indication of respect for history. He and other existential thinkers are not interrogated historically, although they have their locus in history. Too often they are quoted in typically “contingent” fashion, as proof-texts.

5. The theologians and historians of Great Britain are no less aware of the “critical” situation than are their American and German colleagues, but in typically British manner they refuse to fall victims to the excitement, nor do they rashly take extreme positions pro or con. This is thoroughly in keeping with the high degree of continuity, stability and flexibility in British life and thought. It is typical that a British philosopher should have published recently a thorough historical study which in intent and in result is a sound and sympathetic statement of the important role which Wilhelm Dilthey plays in the history of existential thought.<sup>4</sup> Its Sophoclean motto, “there are many wondrous things but none more wondrous than man,” aptly describes Dilthey’s thought, and it may be legitimately understood in existential terms.

It is equally typical that theologians and New Testament scholars, both in the free and in the established churches of Great Britain, incorporate this or that element of new thought and discovery into the framework of their own life and thought, thus enriching but by no means changing either. The passionate and noble emphasis on the sovereignty

<sup>4</sup> H. A. Hodges, *Wilhelm Dilthey: an Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945). Mention may here be made of an excellent American study, J. C. Burckhardt, *Force and Freedom: Reflections on History*, ed. by J. H. Nichols (New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1943). The editor’s critical analysis of Burckhardt and his work has far more than biographical significance.

of God, the "wholly other," has carried mighty streams of water over the mills of indigenous British Anglicanism and Calvinism. Similarly, British theologians and New Testament scholars may well feel that others have once more come around to the view never abandoned and always cherished by them that Scripture and theology belong together in the way in which every apple has a skin. They seldom say it, because it is irrelevant to the issue.

6. Several conclusions may be drawn from the preceding analysis of problems arising from the relationship between New Testament study and theology. There is a strong and widespread trend toward the resuming of close relationships. The view of unity was never wholly lost anywhere but it was radically questioned and denied, especially in Germany and in the United States. Since the early twenties it has been the most vigorous factor in theological thought as well as in the historical study of the New Testament, throughout Europe and America. The movement was *primarily* led by theologians, not by historians of early Christianity for reasons which were stated above.

From the pronouncements and from the attitude of the more radical exponents of the new theology, one easily obtains the impression, despite their occasional disavowals, that here is more than a trend; here is the truth, all the truth, nothing but the truth. Recently an American Protestant minister was asked about the status of the new theology in his section of the country. He answered that everybody had accepted it, in a tone which clearly implied that this was no longer a reasonable question. On further questioning it appeared that "everybody" meant himself and a special group within his own limited set of ministerial and professorial friends. He would not go so far as to name a single congregation on which the new theology had produced noticeable effects. It would be unfair to attach too much weight to such questions and to such answers, but together they do prove more vividly, simply and convincingly than a theoretical analysis could that the new trend is—as yet—no more than that; that the trend cannot be ignored; that fundamental questions are still in the stage of initial discussion; that we are as yet far from a vital Christian faith springing from the depths of actual Christian fellowship for which all Christian theologies are working. Thus arises, for the purposes of this paper, one further question: what is the attitude of German, British and American New Testament scholars to the problem of the relationship between New Testament study and theology?

## II

I. Some further analysis of the atmosphere in which contemporary historians do their work will clarify the question and the answer. With a few noteworthy exceptions the students of the origin and early history of Christianity have been slow in responding to the enthusiastic overtures made by the exponents of existential-biblical theology. This may no longer be true in Germany, but it is still true in the United States, and, perhaps somewhat less, in Great Britain. It is still too early to state the reasons for this fact with any degree of historical objectivity. But it is possible to state with certainty several single reasons of varying weight. First, we have already observed that New Testament scholars deal with a concrete, undeniable historical process. Therefore no such radical unrest could arise in their fold as beset the theologians who could never be sure whether they had any concrete subject matter or not.

Second, the best historians of early Christianity, much like modern historians in general, were always much concerned about the true methods, objects and meanings of historical study. The intensive elaboration of preliminary techniques for the scientific establishment of what the materials, the documents, the evidence as such were, presents a chapter of admirable achievement. The great achievements in this kind of work led many a historian to the attitude that it constitutes the whole of the science of history. Every physicist knows that his work really begins after he has properly isolated the subject matter of his research, and after he has set up an adequate apparatus for experimentation. Historians sometimes do consider their work done at the point where it really begins.

Much more admirable was the development of methods for the proper interpretation of the historical facts properly established. The social, biographical, economic, political, national, racial, anthropological, cultural, esthetic and religious interpretations of historical periods rose from mere germs to maturity within the course of the last century. Here was a concrete body of fact, brilliant methods for their interpretation, and even more brilliant, really valid results. There seemed to be little need for a revolution in the world of the historian.

Yet this is not the whole story. Some historians and philosophers (e. g., Burckhardt, Nietzsche, Dilthey) saw how hopelessly this so-called scientific historiography was involved in meaningless relativism, in self-destructive conflict, in sheer nonsense, and in pernicious group selfishness. Burckhardt and Dilthey saw more clearly than their nineteenth-century



contemporaries that history is able to break free from the chains of relativism. Although they hardly dared to leave the ground of empiricism, they arrived, each in his own way, at the very threshold to something else. Their work is being carried on constructively by their more recent followers.<sup>5</sup>

2. Rudolf Bultmann, professor of New Testament at the University of Marburg, Germany, has done distinguished work during the last thirty years in the historical study of the New Testament and of early Christianity. His chief work has been in the study of the four Gospels, in the form of critical monographs, commentaries and a constructive, historical presentation of the teachings of Jesus. Besides, he has published numerous pamphlets and articles on historical and theological issues. Among these, attention must be called to a comparatively brief but amazingly solid treatment of Paul's life and theology. It is one of the most significant publications on this subject and has not received the attention which it deserves from historians and theologians alike.<sup>6</sup>

In the early twenties Bultmann embraced the dialectic theology and has become among New Testament scholars its most distinguished and vocal apologist. His book *Jesus* aroused considerable excitement because it represents a historical presentation of the teachings of Jesus written by a historian whose judgment is that our knowledge of the historical Jesus is most uncertain, and by a dialectic theologian for whom the New Testament, as a historical document, is also the sacred Word of God.<sup>7</sup>

At first few historians and theologians knew what to make of the book. Today, after almost two decades, the situation is little better as regards the basic principles underlying Bultmann's interpretation of the teachings of Jesus. But this book, translated into English under the title *Jesus and the Word* (see footnote 6), can now be appreciated, by

<sup>5</sup> R. Klibansky and H. J. Paton, eds., *Philosophy and History: Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1936). This volume of essays is an excellent introduction to the important work of contemporary philosophers on the subject of history. A similar introduction to (and summary of) theological thought on the same subject is, *The Kingdom of God and History* (Official Oxford Conference Books, vol. 3. Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1938). Here the range of problems is most fully set forth in the essays by Paul Tillich and W. D. Wendland.

<sup>6</sup> R. Bultmann, *Jesus* (Berlin, 1926); English translation, *Jesus and the Word* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1934); *Die Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition* (Göttingen, 1921). See also F. C. Grant, *Form Criticism* (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1934), which includes Bultmann's "The Study of the Gospels." Also the article "Paulus" in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (2d ed., Tübingen, 1927-31, vol. IV, cols. 1019-1045). The most important source for the study of Bultmann's theological views is his *Glauben und Verstehen: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Tübingen, 1933). This volume contains ten essays previously published and five new ones. While they are largely polemical and negative, they also contain much of constructive value to historians and theologians. Provided with a critical commentary, some of them might profitably be translated into English.

<sup>7</sup> Cf., e. g., *Jesus and the Word*, pp. 215-19, and *Glauben und Verstehen*, p. 133.

and large, as a masterful, historical and objective presentation of the content and meaning of the teachings of Jesus. It is beautifully simple and coherent and differs in no essential respect from what contemporary New Testament scholarship in general has worked out. Bultmann's *Jesus* definitely shows, as he himself insists,<sup>8</sup> that dialectical theology has nothing to add to the historical method as such. He does assert that the former renders the latter more profound. If dialectic theologians would take this assertion seriously and demonstrate it constructively, it might eliminate the greatest weakness besetting their thought. Their insistence on the "skandalon" (scandal) of the cross of Christ is indeed impressive and unobjectionable, but it does not justify the scandal of their naïve and obscure treatment of history in general and the historical Jesus in particular. Kierkegaard's scathing criticism of Hegel's particular worship of history does in no wise justify its resuscitation a hundred years later, however indispensable the properly critical appreciation of both Kierkegaard and Hegel may be today.

But when Bultmann, the historian, says that the teachings of the historical Jesus may not really be his teachings, but rather the teachings of his earliest followers,<sup>9</sup> and that this makes no difference theologically, he is no longer a historian. He is open to the charge of gnosticism. He saves himself from the charge only by consistently evading a positive and full answer to the question how significant the historicity of Jesus as such is theologically. He has made it clear that fundamental significance does attach to it. He says, "no sane person can deny" the historicity of Jesus.<sup>10</sup> The answer to such a judgment must be that the denial of the historicity of Jesus is saner than the arbitrary and meaningless insistence on his bare historicity and nothing else. "Historicity" apart from the flesh and bones of history is nothing but an abstract concept, equally sterile for the historian and the theologian.

Bultmann's gnostic leanings betray themselves repeatedly in other ways. His misuse of a familiar Pauline phrase may serve as a further illustration, since it brings the crucial issue into focus. It is the phrase "Christ after the flesh"<sup>11</sup> (II Cor. 5:16). For Bultmann it means "the human personality of Jesus," which he declares to be completely

<sup>8</sup> *Glauben und Verstehen*, pp. 114-33.

<sup>9</sup> *Jesus and the Word*, pp. 13ff.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Romans 1:3, and 9:6.

beyond the grasp of historical understanding; and, according to Bultmann, Paul in his theology paid no attention to this historical Jesus.<sup>12</sup> This view is not original with Bultmann. Among liberal New Testament scholars it has been extremely popular since Wrede. It is very important to observe that Paul uses the phrase "after the flesh" three times while speaking about Christ (II Cor. 5:16; Rom. 1:3 and 9:6), but in each case the phrase is used adverbially and not adjectively. Paul never sets a human historical Jesus over against a spiritual, cosmic Christ. This distinction is a device, if not a vice, invented by modern critics to clarify the development and varieties of early Christian christology. In fact, it clarifies nothing of any importance and positively prevents the simple and decisive insight that the historical Jesus and the risen Lord are in the whole New Testament always seen as one. Nowhere in the New Testament has the faith in the risen Lord displaced the reality and importance of the historical Jesus. The New Testament faith in the risen Lord has only one meaning, namely, that it alone furnishes the true understanding of the historical Jesus. No New Testament writing witnesses to a faith which hangs by the tenuous thread of abstract historicity. All speak about the facts of the ministry, the death, the birth of Jesus Christ, which are no events and mean nothing either historically or theologically apart from the "human personality" of Jesus.

The interpretation of II Corinthians 5:16b, which Bultmann took over from his liberal opponents, suffers from another error. All these interpreters forget that Paul here makes no important statement about his christology. He does say that nobody knows Christ any longer in the way those knew him who walked the roads of Galilee with him (Luke 13:26). The fact is overlooked that Paul's statement is no more than an afterthought, however important, to the immediately preceding statement, "henceforth know we no man after the flesh" (vs. 16a). Furthermore, it is necessary to view the whole fifth chapter of II Corinthians as a part of Paul's searching and magnificent interpretation of his office as a "minister of the new testament." It begins with 3:1 and ends with 6:13. The subject matter of these chapters is anthropological, not christological.

In Bultmann's book on the historical Jesus, sound as it is exegetically, we have in essence a body of teaching which is artificially and subjectively abstracted from the Synoptic Gospels. In the latter, Jesus, whatever else He may be, is a man of flesh and bones placed naturally and significantly in the context of past and contemporary history. There

<sup>12</sup> *Glauben und Verstehen*, p. 259.

is in them indeed less worship of the flesh and bone of the "historical" Jesus than there is in Bultmann worship of the abstract concept of historicity.

The greatest criticism of Bultmann's theological essays (see footnote 6) is that he is more interested and effective in demolishing "liberalism" than he is in the constructive exposition of his own views. He furnishes no more than programmatic theses. If Bultmann and his critics will remedy this defect, dialectic theology may gain in stature what it may lose in gnostic obscurantism and self-satisfaction.

3. Many other New Testament scholars of high repute in the United States and abroad have labored as hard as Bultmann in relating New Testament study and theology, but they have been less willing or quite unwilling to embrace dialectical theology wholesale. Like Bultmann they combat historical relativism to which the New Testament can be at best no more than an interesting interlude of past and dead history; like Bultmann they combat modern empiricisms and idealisms based on the belief in progress via science; like Bultmann they underscore the fact that the teachings of Jesus, of Paul, of the Fourth Gospel are inescapably eschatological; like Bultmann they believe that eschatology also must remain at the center of Christian faith and theology. All this illustrates the important fact that there is nothing specifically "dialectic" in these propositions. It also points up the importance of these propositions, which in dialectic theology find only their most extreme expression. Extremism is indeed constitutive of faith; faith is no faith unless it is extreme, radical, absolute, eschatological. But if radical faith is buttressed by a radical theology, faith becomes arbitrary superstition. God is indeed "wholly other," but no theology ought ever to yield to the temptation of being "wholly other."

Martin Dibelius, professor of New Testament at the University of Heidelberg, is a scholar highly regarded for numerous important studies in the field of the New Testament. In 1925 he published a work in which he attempts "by way of an analysis of our contemporary world to gain an understanding of the beginnings of Christianity and from that understanding to arrive at the estimate of the relevance of Christianity to our contemporary world."<sup>18</sup> This is the methodology of a mature

<sup>18</sup> M. Dibelius, *Geschichtliche und Übergeschichtliche Religion im Neuen Testament* (Göttingen, 1925). The quotation above is from the preface. The second unchanged edition appeared in 1929, under the preferable title *Evangelium und Welt*. This work is, so far, the most substantial source for the study of the theological aspect of Dibelius' work. In English the following works are available: *From Tradition to Gospel* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1925); *A Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian Literature* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1936). Theological implications are also dealt with in *Gospel Criticism and Christology* (London, 1935); *The Sermon on the Mount* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1940); *The Message of Jesus Christ* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1939).

historian. Such a one knows that he cannot work without presuppositions, but he understands these presuppositions and their all-pervasive implications. Only in this way can he arrive at true and valid historical judgments, which in turn illuminate and judge his initial presuppositions. The importance of final conclusions depends on the relevance and depth of the initial presuppositions and on the subject of his historical study.

In 1937, Dibelius told the writer of this article that his "Gospel and World" (see footnote 13) had already outlived its usefulness, because it was too deeply conditioned by the particular problems obtaining in Germany during the teens and the early twenties. Bultmann took Dibelius severely to task for this weakness,<sup>14</sup> without realizing that his own position suffers from the same weakness, which in his case amounts to a veritable "sickness unto death," since he simply dismisses the "problems of the age" as irrelevant.

In 1938, Dibelius published an article entitled "The Riddle Man."<sup>15</sup> The article grows out of a discussion of one of Brunner's works. Dibelius here finds himself in substantial agreement with Brunner's position. It would be premature to regard this article as an indication that Dibelius is moving into the camp of Brunner's modified existential theology. The fact does prove that there is substantial similarity in method and subject matter between historians and theologians of varying viewpoints. One may look forward to further significant contributions in this field from Dibelius' pen.

4. In Great Britain, C. H. Dodd, professor of New Testament at the University of Cambridge, has been a prominent leader in theological emphasis on New Testament study. This is particularly true of his more recent writings, beginning with *The Authority of the Bible* (1928) and his commentary on Romans (1932).<sup>16</sup> This commentary is one of the best and most readable works in this type of interpretation. Theologically

<sup>14</sup> *Glauben und Verstehen*, pp. 65-84.

<sup>15</sup> "Das Rätsel Mensch" in *Die Neue Rundschau*, XL, vol. II (1938), 1-11.

<sup>16</sup> Dodd's publications show a remarkable degree of unity. The problems of history and eschatology are in the foreground of his interest, however specific the subject matter of his various writings may be. Note especially, *The Authority of the Bible* (London, 1928); *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1932); "The Mind of Paul: a Psychological Approach" and "The Mind of Paul: Change and Development," in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, XVII and XVIII (1933 and 1944); *The Parables of the Kingdom* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1936); *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (London, 1936); *The Kingdom of God and History* (Official Oxford Conference Books, vol. 3. Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1938); *History and the Gospel* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1938); "The Gospels as History," in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, XXII (1938), 122-43. This article sets forth some of the most crucial aspects of Dodd's historical and theological thought.

speaking, Dodd's *Romans* is characterized by typically British progressive conservatism and chiefly by the soundness of his interpretation of Paul's thought. It is only in Dodd's subsequent publications that a new and more intense preoccupation with theological problems appears.

In this group of writings (see footnote 16) his views are still typical of indigenous British Protestantism in general, but the influences from across the channel are now considerably stronger. The latter, however, are always absorbed by the former. The former appear in Dodd's general progressive conservatism and modern Platonism, in his high regard for the historical church, for ecclesiastical tradition, for the sacraments, and, last but not least, in his admirable Welsh-evangelical-prophetic spirit. The continental influences appear in his large debt to form-criticism, in his polemic against the philosophies of progress, in his emphasis on the importance of eschatology, in his dialectic between occurrence and interpretation, which together yield a historical event.<sup>17</sup> There are many other more subtle but nonetheless strong traces of non-British influence. His judgment on dialectical theology is politely and cautiously negative. "It is not unfair to say that some theologians of the new school, in their horror of 'historism' are verging incautiously upon a new docetism."<sup>18</sup> All these elements yield an appearance of considerable coherence. This impression arises in part from a further basic characteristic of Dodd's entire work; namely, that for him the historical and the theological task is a priori one and the same. Typical in this respect is, e. g., a section of ten pages in which the historical judgment of the New Testament immediately yields the position of Dodd the theologian.<sup>19</sup> Another example is Dodd's famous theory of "realized eschatology," with which he credits the historical Jesus, although few scholars have followed him in this respect without serious qualifications.<sup>20</sup>

The following quotation is particularly puzzling and instructive: "Some at least of the apocalypticists surely knew that the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but righteousness, peace and joy; that is, it is the pure reality which we partly apprehend in the most exalted moments of our human experience in time."<sup>21</sup> Who is speaking here?

<sup>17</sup> Cf. the last item in note 16.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>19</sup> *The Apostolic Preaching*, pp. 208-18.

<sup>20</sup> Cf., e. g., C. T. Craig, "Realized Eschatology" in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LVI (1937), 17-26.

<sup>21</sup> *The Apostolic Preaching*, p. 208.



Dodd the historian, the theologian, or the Platonist, or all three? Such a procedure makes the historical and the theological task simpler than it is. Of course, there are in Dodd's work significant exceptions to this method, but they only serve to aggravate the methodological weakness.

For a brief section in which the reader will readily observe most if not all the elements of Dodd's thinking listed above, one may cite the last ten pages of the chapter on "Eschatology and History."

There can be no doubt that Dodd has greatly enriched and furthered New Testament study as well as theology. One looks forward with justified expectations to his future contributions.

5. Finally, what is happening on the American scene? The fact is that American Protestant theology has produced its own new theologians in Reinhold Niebuhr, his school and his associates, but in New Testament scholarship we have produced no Dodd, no Dibelius, and certainly no Bultmann. This fact, however, is no cause for an inferiority complex. We need not regret that our New Testament scholars have shown a tendency to hold their peace and their horses until they know where they are going. Much is to be said for watchful waiting and solid preparation over against rushing into print.

It may fall to the lot of the American New Testament scholars to make a really substantial contribution to the problem without losing too much time and the sense of direction by too much enthusiastic but ill-advised literary experimentation in public. There is evidence for the probability of such a development. It is no secret that New Testament scholars here have important work in hand; many of them have already made substantial contributions. Only a brief, incomplete biographical list is possible within the limits of this paper. It is hoped that it may help to accelerate and intensify the desirable kind of scholarly co-operation. Our immediate purpose is to indicate what has been done.

Professor F. C. Grant's *Frontiers of Christian Thinking*, which appeared ten years ago, is as characteristically American as Dodd's works are British or as Bultmann's are German. In it are combined the virtues of an excellent New Testament scholar, a good churchman, a positivist American, an aggressive, liberal and ecumenical Christian. Especially Chapters II and III, devoted to the problems of christology, deserve a great deal more attention than they have apparently received. Professor John Knox has devoted a well-known monograph to the subject

of christology.<sup>22</sup> Professor A. C. Purdy's *Jesus As His Followers Knew Him*, is both a historical and a theological interpretation of the Gospels which exhibits unusual intellectual independence, historical-critical judgment, theological sense, balance without compromise, spiritual vigor, and disciplined imagination. Recent works by Professors Colwell, Craig, Filson, Wilder<sup>23</sup> and many others exhibit critical competence, ability for writing constructive history, and courage to face the theological issues of the contemporary Christian faith with a sense of responsibility and caution. Work like this is substantial evidence of vigorous life. It promises well for the future.

If the objection be raised that the faith of the Church cannot wait for the results of biblical scholarship, the answer to this earnest but somewhat thoughtless question is that it never had to wait for them and need not do so today. To be sure, faith would die without the service of scholarship: biblical and theological scholarship also would die without faith. There always has been available more than enough of both to suffice for any need that is really felt and filled in the act of faith and in the accompanying act of personal honesty, intellectual, emotional and moral. Or, if anyone be tempted to conclude that ours is an age of sad intellectual and spiritual confusion, the following answer might be made. Today's intellectual and spiritual confusion is as preferable to the blind intellectual totalitarianisms and to the sterile idealisms of thirty and forty years ago as the weeds and flowers are preferable to the graves on which they grow. In the problem of the relationship between New Testament study and theology the ecumenical Church of Christ faces today a responsibility greater than that for the economic, political and social reorganization of the world. For the solution of the first problem alone can furnish the Christian way to the solution of all other problems. It is not that faith precedes action, but faith makes action. Faith becomes active as love (see Galatians 5:6).

<sup>22</sup> *The Man Christ Jesus* (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1941). A second book on the same subject by the same author is in process of publication.

<sup>23</sup> E. g., E. C. Colwell, *The Study of the Bible* (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1937); C. T. Craig, *The Beginning of Christianity* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943); F. V. Filson, *One Lord, One Faith* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1943); A. N. Wilder, *Eschatology and Ethics in the Teachings of Jesus* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1939). See also G. F. Thomas, ed., *The Vitality of the Christian Tradition* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1944).

# “The Way to Divine Knowledge”—A Theological Reprint

William Law (1686-1761)

This classic expression of religious intuitionism and mysticism by the author of *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* was published in 1752. It was written after Law had come under the pronounced influence of Jacob Boehme. It betrays an extreme distrust of the prevailing eighteenth-century rationalism, an uncommon spiritual power, the practical quality of Law's theology, and his remarkable gifts of expression. The extended discourse, from which this selection was taken, may be found in the London edition of Law's *Works*.

“**T**RUE and genuine religion is *nature*, is *life* and the *working* of life; and therefore, wherever it is, reason has no more power over it, than over the roots that grow secretly in the earth, or the life that is working in the highest heavens. If therefore you are afraid of reason hurting your religion, it is a sign, that your religion is not yet as it should be, is not a *self-evident growth of nature and life within you*, but has much of mere opinion in it.

“Observe the word *self-evident*; for there lies the truth of the matter; for you have no more of the truth of religion, than what is *self-evident* in you. A blind man may be rich in notions and opinions about the nature, power and good of light; and in this case, one blind man may perplex another, and unsettle his notions; but when the light manifests itself, and is become *self-evident*, then he is at once delivered from an uncertainty about it. Now religion is light and life; but light and life can only manifest themselves, and can nowhere be known, but where they are *self-evident*.

“You can know nothing of God, of nature, of heaven, or hell, or yourself, but so far as all these things are *self-evident* in you. Neither could any of these things be of any concern to you, but because they can all of them be *self-evident* in you. For the bare history, or hearsay of any one thing, signifies no more to you, than the hearsay of any other thing. And if God and heaven, hell and the devil, the world and the flesh, were not all of them *self-evident* in you, you could have no more good or hurt from any hearsay about them, than from the hearsay of pleasant gardens, and dismal prisons, in the world of the moon.

“Let it be supposed, that your ingenious reason should suggest to you, that there are no devils or hell, and therefore no occasion to believe

that revelation that gives an account of *them*: In this case, do but turn to that which is *sensible* and *self-evident* in you, and then you must know, in the same certainty as you know yourself to be alive, that there is *wrath, self-torment, envy, malice, evil-will, pride, cruelty, revenge, etc.* Now say, if you please, there are no other devils but these, and that men have no other devils to resist; and then you will have said truth enough, have owned devils enough, and enough confessed, that you are in the midst of them; that you are everywhere tempted by them; and that flesh and blood is too weak to resist them, and therefore wants some kind of savior, of so contrary a nature, as has power to destroy these works of the devil in you.

"Now this is the only knowledge that you can possibly have of an outward hell, and outward devils; and this knowledge is as *self-evident* in you as your own thoughts, and is as near to you as your own life. But to see and know an outward hell, or outward devils, that are outward living creatures, can never be your own case, till all that is divine and human in you is extinguished; and then you will have knowledge enough, how hell is a place, and how the devils of rage, wrath, envy, and pride, etc., are living creatures.

"Again, let it be supposed, that your sceptic reason had brought you into doubt about the being and providence of God in you. . . . If you turn from . . . idle debates and demonstrations of reason, to *that* which is *sensible* and *self-evident* in you, then you have a *sensible, self-evident* proof of the true God of life, and light, and love, and goodness, as manifest to you as your own life. For with the same self-evident certainty, as you know that you think, and are alive, you know that there is *goodness, love, benevolence, meekness, compassion, wisdom, peace, joy, etc.* Now this is the *self-evident* God, that forces Himself to be known, and found, and felt, in every man, in the same certainty of self-evidence, as every man feels and finds his own thoughts and life. And this is the God, whose being and providence, thus self-evident in us, call for our worship, and love, and adoration, and obedience to Him: And this worship, and love, and adoration, and conformity to the divine goodness, is our *true belief* in, and *sure knowledge* of, the self-evident God. And atheism is not the denial of a first omnipotent Cause, but is purely and solely nothing else but the disowning, forsaking, and renouncing the goodness, virtue, benevolence, meekness, etc., of the Divine Nature, that has made itself thus self-evident in us, as the true object

of our own worship, conformity, love, and adoration. This is the *one true God*, or the Deity of goodness, virtue, and love, etc., the certainty of whose being and providence, opens itself to you in the self-evident sensibility of your own nature; and inspires His likeness, and love of His goodness, into you. And as this is the only true knowledge that you can possibly have of God and the Divine Nature, so it is a knowledge not to be debated, or lessened by any objections of reason, but is as self-evident as your own life. . . . For neither God, nor heaven, nor hell, nor the devil, nor the world, and the flesh, can be any otherwise knowable in you, or by you, but by their own existence and manifestation in you. And all pretended knowledge of any of these things, beyond or without this self-evident sensibility of their birth within you, is only such knowledge of them, as the blind man hath of that light, that never entered into him.

“And as this is our only true knowledge, so every man is, by his birth and nature, brought into a certain and self-evident sensibility of all these things. And if we bring ourselves by reasoning and dispute into an uncertainty about them, it is an uncertainty that we have created for ourselves, and comes not from God and nature. For God and nature have made that which is our greatest concern, to be our greatest certainty; and to be known by us in the same self-evidence, as our own pain or pleasure is. . . . If you call that only God, and religion, and goodness, which truly are so, and can only be known by their self-evident powers and life in you, then you are in the truth, and the truth will make you free from all doubts. . . . But if you turn from *self-evidence*, to *reason* and *opinion*, you turn from the *Tree of life*, and you give yourself up to certain delusion.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Works of the Reverend William Law* (London, 1893), VII, 232-35.

# The Rebirth of Theology

PAUL LEHMANN

**N**APOLEON is said once to have remarked: "*Si je n'étais Napoléon, je voudrais être Grégoire VII.*" He could not then know, of course, that he would die in exile, and even had he known, it may be doubted whether he would have consented to the exchange. For Napoleon's rhetorical admiration for the creator of the political papacy of the Middle Ages gave voice to a more and more widely, if somewhat rashly, shared conviction that a permanent shift of focus had occurred with respect to what counts in the world. According to a letter written from Rome on February 26, 1768, the year before Napoleon's birth, it was felt that within fifty years there would be neither a pope nor a priest in the Holy City.

These expectations have scarcely been realized. It is, moreover, a little difficult from this perspective to understand how they could have been seriously advanced. But if we consider the course of human affairs from Napoleon to Hitler in cultural rather than in political terms, it may be possible to offer some appraisal of the transformation of the abortive anticlerical expectations of the latter half of the eighteenth century into the more promising religious outlook upon the shape of things to come. I am venturing to suggest that the central factor in this cultural transformation is the rebirth of theology. It is to the nature of this rebirth that I should like to draw attention in this discussion.

In his compendium of theology Saint Thomas begins with the query whether, besides philosophy, any further doctrine is required? He answers:

It was necessary for man's salvation that there should be a knowledge revealed by God, besides philosophical science built up by human reason. Firstly, indeed, because man is directed to God, as to an end that surpasses the grasp of his reason. . . . Hence it was necessary for the salvation of man that certain truths which exceed human reason should be made known to him by divine revelation. Even as regards those truths about God which human reason could have discovered, it was necessary that man should be taught by divine revelation; because the truth about God such as reason could discover, would only be known by a few, and that after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors. . . . Therefore, in order that the salvation of men might be brought about more fitly and more surely, it was necessary that they should be taught divine truths by divine revelation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Summa Theologica* I. 1.



According to this passage, theology is the science of sacred doctrine, or, the science of revealed truth. Now it is important to recognize that this thirteenth-century formulation was no arbitrary one. It rested securely upon the two foundation stones of Western culture. Greece had pioneered in and provided the methodology and the categories of science. The Hebrew-Christian Scriptures had defined and delineated the fact and the substance of revelation.

Xenophon tells us that Socrates "used to inquire concerning things pertaining to man, asking 'What is piety, and what is impiety? What is good, and what base? What is justice, and what injustice? What is a state, and what a statesman?' and so forth." In so doing, Socrates set the terms of reflective inquiry in a twofold sense. In the first place, he formulated the theory which had underlain the scientific method of his predecessors by making it plain that the fundamental question which any science raises is the question "what is it?" And secondly, Socrates put the inquiry concerning human things on as sound a basis as the inquiry concerning nature. Saint Thomas is, therefore, following a tried and true tradition when he undertakes to show that sacred doctrine is an entirely proper object of inquiry. In regarding the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures as such an object, he is simply taking account of thirteen centuries of cultural history, and is proceeding according to a method of analysis and proof which for eighteen centuries no one would seriously have denied.

But something has happened to our understanding of the scientific character of theology. The queen of the sciences has not only been bereft of a court but of every royal prerogative as well. Since the days of the Angelic Doctor, wide and fundamental social, political and cultural changes have occurred which have not only diminished the importance of theology but have effectively challenged its relevance. The object of Saint Thomas' immense reflective energy, like the language in which that energy came forth, has died, or at least been rendered comatose. One may accommodate the metaphor to the degree of nostalgia. We have, instead, gone Positivist; i. e., we feel in bone and marrow that this world is the only source and object of real knowledge. This is, of course, not in every respect satisfactory. But we are "positive" that the only path to satisfaction lies along the way of the patient application and indefinite extension of the method of empirical observation and the logical principles appropriate to such observation. In paraphrase of Saint Thomas, we are

quite certain that "besides philosophical science built up by human reason," it is not necessary for man's salvation that there should be any other avenue of knowledge.

It was Auguste Comte who, in his *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, gave perhaps the most celebrated and systematic exposition of this conviction. Comte considered theology to be the earliest and most primitive stage in the long history of man's attempt to exchange his minority for majority. This majority had finally been reached in the age of science, and was destined to remain. Fortunately or unfortunately, Comte's dream has not come true. So that if now it is possible to speak about a rebirth of theology, the reason is that humanity, having come of age after its long minority (the phrase is Comte's), is not so sure of itself as Comte supposed it would be. Maturity has a curious way of chastening the awkward enthusiasms of adolescence.

The transition from Scholasticism to Positivism can be said to have altered the Thomistic appraisal of theology mainly in three ways. In the first place, from the side of theology itself a confining shift occurred which more and more gave to *doctrine* the ascendancy over *revelation* as the object of theological inquiry. It is true that the deductive formalism of Scholasticism and the too-consistent Aristotelianism of Saint Thomas were not sufficiently flexible and thus not well suited to the more dynamic earth-bound and humanistic energies that were to dominate the Renaissance. But it must always be kept in mind that medieval thought and life were very far from the paralyzing uniformity of an ecclesiastically imposed authoritarianism. Mr. Lewis Mumford has brilliantly, if debatably, suggested that the Gothic cathedral rather than the scholastic philosophy was the "true epitome of medieval life." Although one feels that he mixes the metaphor a trifle by declaring that the *Summa* are "rather to be considered as a work of engineering," one is intrigued by the observation that in the cathedral, "gargoyle and virgin, flying buttress and glass wall, utilitarian organ loft and decorated choir stall, earth and sky, were thus wrought into a living unity. . . . For it possessed qualities that went far beyond the greatest rational formulations: above all, in its originality, its gifts for improvisation, its readiness to accept tension and to welcome change." Tension, however, and even change, precipitated the scholastic debates before the triumph of Thomism was finally achieved. As regards theology, these debates were prompted by the concern for the rational relevance and the proper substance of revelation. And so long as men

not only live dynamically but also find it necessary to think about what they are doing and where they are going, the question of truth is as important as the question of life. The scholastic view held that revelation is indispensable to every seeker after the whole truth about life and that doctrine is the instrument of revelation. As a matter of fact, doctrine has really never been anything else.

So long as doctrine is the instrument of revelation, it is possible to inquire concerning its rational relevance and thereby also to incorporate the proper substance of revelation within the whole truth. But what is truth? It is perhaps not accidental that the question has been immortalized by Pilate rather than by Aristotle who also asked it. For Pilate was confronted by an authoritative incarnation of the Truth so that his question ricocheted against the limits set for it and sent its echo sounding down the centuries. When Aristotle heard Plato's lectures on philosophy, he wrote down in his notebook the definition of his teacher that "knowledge is 'two' and comparable with a line; for knowledge (being one point) goes to another point, different from it in one respect only." Hence, Plato emphasized that knowledge of an object always involves a *tertium quid*, a third principle, the line between the points, as it were, with respect to which the relation between the points may be said to be true. The difference between Plato and Pilate is that for the former, this third point which sets the limits in terms of which knowledge of the truth is possible, is a limit in thought only and apprehended by logic (what Plato called "dialectic"); it is not a limit of existence apprehended in a personal encounter like that between Pilate and Jesus. Scholasticism had a way of getting over from logic to existence, from the syllogism to doctrine, from reason to revelation because its point of reference, its *tertium quid*, was the authority of the Catholic tradition.

When, however, the Reformation dislocated this authority, it was unable to work out an alternative in time to prevent inadequate substitutes. Consequently, the way was open for fresh and acrimonious controversy over the relations between revelation and reason which achieved the net result of identifying revelation with doctrine and detaching theology from all rational relevance. An inerrant Scripture became the focal point of this identification. The literal inerrancy of the Bible had never been taught by the Church before. But now the idea could be carried to the extreme of the Swiss Formula of Consensus of 1675, according to which even the vowel points of the Hebrew text were the work of divine

penmanship. And when Philip Melanchthon, Luther's friend and amanuensis, emerged from the conferences between the Reformers and the Romanists and defined faith as assent to doctrine, the possibility of any theological criticism of scriptural literalism was removed in advance. Thus theology entered upon the modern world in a battered and helpless condition. It could still be carried on in the old sense within the bosom of the Counter Reformation. But it could never again be carried on in the same way. Theology had ceased to be ecumenical and revelation was no longer catholic. Protestantism on its part had never really pursued the Reformation insights into the relations between philosophical science and the doctrines beyond reason. It had established its own inferior brand of Scholasticism according to which doctrine was no longer the instrument but the master of revelation.

The second factor to be noted about the transition from Scholasticism to Positivism proceeded from quite a different quarter. A change had come about not only from the side of theology but from the side of science as well. We encounter here the somewhat paradoxical circumstance that science was at once more broadly and more narrowly conceived. It was more broadly conceived in the sense of an extension of the range of inquiry. The number of times one found it possible and necessary to ask the question, what is a thing? increased considerably. At the same time, the answer to this question came more and more to be derived from observation and classification rather than from initial and universal principles. The sense in which such a tendency involved a significant delimitation of what had hitherto prevailed as scientific method can perhaps be most easily understood from the change wrought in the conception of nature. What Saint Thomas called "philosophical science" was derived, as we have seen, from the Socratic habit of asking concerning *the nature of a thing*. Since the thirteenth century the habit has come to be reversed, so that the question is, *what is a thing in nature?* In both cases, nature is a measurable order. But in the former case, the measure is taken by logic; in the latter, by mathematics. In any case, if today the conviction is widely and indeed still tenaciously held that the world is everything and there is nothing beyond it, it is because scientific method has undergone a restrictive alteration no less significant than the change already noted with respect to the relation between doctrine and revelation. A world in which every possibility of thought and experience is reducible to empirical measure and mathematical order has indeed no room for more. That order

may be described in terms of highly abstract symbols, the postulates of which may be transempirical, but it is still self-explanatory and self-sufficient.

And yet, it is possible even for modern man, for whom the synthetic comprehensiveness of the medieval mind is gone beyond recall, to take the world seriously without taking it so completely for granted. A case in point is offered by Dr. E. M. W. Tillyard, Fellow of Jesus College and Lecturer in Cambridge University, who recently published *The Elizabethan World Picture*. His thesis is, briefly, that the Elizabethans were neither so thoroughly nor so enthusiastically secular as many have supposed. Be that as it may, the Elizabethan Age was on the threshold of this transition between the theological and the secular temper that we have been describing. As such, it may serve profitably to remind us of other ways that might have been taken and of extremes that might have been and will yet have to be avoided if we are truly to understand the world in which we live. Doctor Tillyard concludes his study with some remarks about the poem by Sir John Davies called *Orchestra*, published in 1596. He writes:

It is a very queer poem, just as the whole substance of this book is a very queer affair. When we are confronted with the notions that God put the element of air, which was hot and moist, between fire, which was hot and dry, and water, which was cold and moist, to stop them fighting, and that while angels take their visible shapes from the ether, devils take theirs from the sublunary air, we cannot assume, try as we may, an Elizabethan seriousness. Yet we shall err grievously if we do not take that seriousness into account or if we imagine that the Elizabethan habit of mind is done with once and for all. If we are sincere with ourselves we must know that we have that habit in our own bosoms somewhere, queer as it may seem. And if we reflect on that habit, we may see that (in queer-ness though not in viciousness) it resembles certain trends of thought in Central Europe, the ignoring of which by our scientifically minded intellectuals has helped not a little to bring the world into its present conflicts and distresses.<sup>3</sup>

The third factor which affected the appraisal of theology in the transition from Scholasticism to Positivism is a new confidence in man. In this respect the Elizabethans still shared the medieval *tertium quid*. Doctor Tillyard declares that "the greatness of the Elizabethan Age was that it contained so much of the new without bursting the noble form of the old order." That form was given substance by the Pauline scheme of sin and salvation and it was given relevance by a profound grasp of the limits set for man by birth and death. Those who know most

<sup>3</sup> *The Elizabethan World Picture*. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1944), pp. 101-02.



about the Middle Ages, moreover, have made it plain that this period was far from antihumanistic. But it has yet to become plain that the steady attack upon the scheme of Christian humanism by the scientific, social and industrial revolutions was nourished by the intense persuasion that man's life was bounded by no significant limits at all. The real conflict was not between antihumanism and humanism but between what M. Jacques Maritain has recently called "true humanism" and pseudo-humanism. Pseudo-humanism ascribes value and significance to human life in terms of an order centered in man himself, whereas true humanism finds that value and significance in terms of an order centered in God. How completely an act of faith is involved in either case is strikingly instanced by the course of modern history which has steadily and stubbornly refuted the basic axia of modern culture. Descartes tells us in his *Discours de la Méthode* that as he was returning to France from the wars in Germany, he was overtaken by winter so that he had to interrupt his journey. Sitting by a stove warming himself, he devoted his unexpected leisure to a summary reflection upon his previous education and experience and came to the conclusion that the only basic certainty was that of his own existence. This, in the judgment of Dr. William Temple, the late Archbishop of Canterbury, was "the most disastrous moment in the history of Europe." Here for the first time it was seriously and systematically proposed that when a man thinks about what his senses tell him, he is not in touch with what is real but is utterly alone with the dubious certainty of his own existence. But what is fateful about this Cartesian revolution is that it ruptured the habits of the Western mind and made man the center of the universe just when the universe was on its way to being regarded as a mechanical, mathematical order, the laws of which were quite indifferent to its newly asserted human center.

Positivism is the last fortress of a human being, who, estranged from God and homeless in nature must, nevertheless, believe in something, and all that remains is himself. The credo is this: we believe that we cannot know with ultimate irrefutability anything at all but insofar as we can know anything at all it is because we have measured it ourselves. And when the devotional history of that faith comes to be definitively written, it begins to look as though the believers in man will be divided between enthusiastic initiates and their more chastened offspring. Condorcet was a contemporary of Napoleon. It was he who asked: "Do not all the observations . . . prove that the moral goodness of man, the



necessary consequence of his organization, is like all his other faculties susceptible of an indefinite improvement? and that nature has connected by a chain which cannot be broken, truth, happiness and virtue?" Sigmund Freud was a contemporary of Hitler. He declared that:

Humanity has in the course of time had to endure from the hands of science two great outrages upon its naïve self-love. The first was when it realized that our earth was not the center of the universe, but only a tiny speck in the world system. . . . The second was when biological research robbed man of his peculiar privilege of having been specially created, and relegated him to a descent from the animal world, implying an irradicable animal nature in him. . . . But man's craving for grandiosity is now suffering the third and most bitter blow from the present-day psychological research which is endeavoring to prove to the "ego" of each one of us that he is not even master in his own house but that he must remain content with the veriest scraps of information about what is going on unconsciously in his own mind.<sup>3</sup>

This is indeed a queer unfolding of a faith! Certainly Saint Paul and Saint Thomas and the Elizabethans worshiped at no queerer shrines. Or could it perhaps really be true that when the gods depart, the half-gods arrive?

The rebirth of theology is part of the dawning contemporary awareness that this is so and that some exorcisms are in order. Indeed it is not too much to describe the present cultural situation as essentially a religious one because there is a growing dissatisfaction with what Professor Tillich has called "self-sufficient finitude" and a notable "direction toward the unconditioned." In painting and poetry, in music and drama, as well as in philosophy and in theology, the search is on for new forms of expression. They are at the moment perhaps largely dislocated and dissonant. But they are one in meaning and intent. Man's faith in man has begun to crack and the endeavor to steady himself on the edge of the abyss has sharpened the perception of new dimensions of height and depth which cannot be compassed by a world of inflexible theological doctrine and ultimate mathematical order. The urge is persistent to explore the hitherto unsuspected relevance of the *beyond* to the *here* and *now*. Ours is in truth a culture in transition. Prevailing trends are being reversed so that man is discovering once again the fact that he never has lived in only one world, but always in two worlds and that only a fresh articulation of the relations between eternity and time can bring his inescapable restlessness to rest.

<sup>3</sup>A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis. Authorized Translation with Preface by G. Stanley Hall. (New York: Horace Liveright, 1920), pp. 246-47.

It is not strange that theology should be the most articulate in this respect. It is by nature and history committed to the two-worldly character of human existence. And if it was the first to fail in keeping the vertical and the horizontal dimensions of that existence in proper relation, it seems only appropriate that it should be the first to repent of its error and make a new beginning. This is indeed what is happening. Both Catholic and Protestant theologians are going back to the foundations of their science and are endeavoring to break through the rigidity of doctrine and are asserting once again the dynamic relevance of revelation. What is called neo-Thomism, associated with such distinguished scholars as MM. Gilson and Maritain, is the most conspicuous Roman Catholic effort in this direction. It sees in the precise and formal distinctions of Aquinas no sterile intellectualism but instead a comprehensive appraisal of the dynamic relations of man in a world of infinite multiplicity and purposeful order. What is called neo-Orthodoxy, associated with such distinguished scholars as Professors Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr, is the decisive intellectual force in the contemporary Protestant Church. It is "neo-orthodox" rather than "orthodox" because it goes back to Luther and Calvin rather than to Melancthon. Luther and Calvin do not establish doctrine as an end in itself. Instead, they regard doctrine as the instrument of revelation. When neo-Orthodoxy focuses its attention chiefly upon the Word of God and upon history, it does not refer to an inerrant Scripture or to any single creedal formulation. It means rather the unique context of ideas in the Bible according to which the natural order and the social order are meaningful to the degree to which man is and remains a responsible person. Man can do so only in response to a God who can be said to speak His Word to man. "True and substantial wisdom," said Calvin, "consists principally in this: the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves." And this is as succinct a clue to the essential aim and conviction of neo-Orthodoxy as any that can be found.

A study of the history of theology underscores the fact that theological vitality is directly proportional to the dynamic relation which theologians are able to maintain between the biblical revelation and the prevailing cultural temper. Thus the first great problem for Christian thought was that of establishing a rule of faith consisting of canon and creed. There followed then the task of interpreting the creedal declarations concerning Jesus in relation to Hellenistic oversimplifications and

errors. This is the theologico-cultural significance of the Trinitarian controversy. It is therefore entirely "according to plan" that man, who has never really been a dogmatic problem before, should be the theological problem today and that theology, in addressing itself to this problem, should be able to recover its scientific character. Theology has once again become the science of revelation, and its categories transcend the sterile and irreconcilable opposition between an inflexible body of doctrine and an inexorable order of nature. Consequently, man may once more understand himself in terms of his true end and find that what he thinks and does in the world counts.

A single illustration of this new relevance of theology must suffice for the present discussion. Perhaps the most important category for understanding the bearing of revelation upon the problem of man is that of *time*. Here common sense and abstract reflection are strangely met. The problem has really never been more accurately stated than by Augustine. He probes the matter most movingly and most minutely in the eleventh book of his *Confessiones*. This is how he puts it:

For what is time? Who can readily and briefly explain this? Who can even in thought comprehend it, so as to utter a word about it? But what in discourse do we mention more familiarly and knowingly than time? And, we understand, when we speak of it; we understand also, when we hear it spoken of by another. What then is time? If no one asks me, I know: if I wish to explain it to one that asketh, I know not: yet I say boldly, that I know, that if nothing passed away, time past were not; and if nothing were coming, a time to come were not; and if nothing were, time present were not. Those two things then, past and to come, how are they, seeing the past now is not, and that to come is not yet? But the present, should it always be present, and never pass into time past, verily it should not be time, but eternity.<sup>4</sup>

Exactly! Here is an undeniable datum of human existence. Without taking account of it, we cannot account for a thing that we think and do. We can neither compass it nor elude it; we know it and know that we do not know it. And when we approach it from a one-dimensional view of our existence we falsify it. If we say with classical Hellenism that all time is eternity, that is, passive and unending duration, we have lost the sense of its dynamic character and the significance of the moment. These surely belong to what we know, when we ask, what is time? If we say with modern naturalism, that time is continuous succession, we may grasp the moment but we have no way of significantly connecting it with

<sup>4</sup> *Confessiones* XI. 14.

any other moment in some total view of our existence. This belongs just as surely to what we know, when we ask, what is time? "To realize the importance of time," wrote Professor Alexander in 1927, "is the gate of wisdom." And eight years earlier, Mr. Bertrand Russell wrote: "To realize the unimportance of time is the gate of wisdom." There is apparently no way in reason, in an entirely this worldly, or entirely other-worldly thinking out of the problem of time to give significance to it. And it is not accidental that neither classical Hellenism nor modern naturalism has been able to give significance to history. But if we took our starting point from the Bible, where God creates not only the world but time, and where the present moment and all moments are wrapped in the significance of His purpose, it might be possible to keep a vivid sense both of the ultimate and of the immediate importance of what we think *in* time and do *with* time. Thus it appears that only in terms of the biblical revelation can time really achieve significance.

The rebirth of theology is the recovery of this kind of relevance for the new dimensions in which the problem of man must be conceived and resolved today. Theology as the science of revelation offers a solution to the inhospitality of nature and the inhumanity of man which for the past three centuries have been threatening human life with meaninglessness. If our age survives, it will be because its culture and its politics have achieved unity and meaning. But this unity and meaning will be nourished by a faith which has itself been fed by a dynamic and relevant science of revelation.

## A Time for Decision in Y.M.C.A.— Church Relations

CLARENCE P. SHEDD

THE publication of the *History of Y.M.C.A.—Church Relations in the United States*, by S. Wirt Wiley,<sup>1</sup> lends an occasion for a careful consideration and reappraisal of this important Protestant interdenominational institution, especially in its relationship to the established churches. Mr. Wiley has provided us with a well-written, illuminating and amazingly accurate record. His work will stand as a noteworthy contribution to the problems of Christian unity. Among others, four important problems are raised by this book. These are, first, the interdenominational character of the Y.M.C.A.; second, its place in the Church as a lay movement; third, the effect on its church relationship of its growing identification in larger cities with community social agencies; and fourth, the implications for its Protestant affiliations of the increasing participation in its work and leadership of young men and boys who are of Jewish, Catholic or Eastern Orthodox faith. While we find ourselves in a large measure of agreement with the discussion of the first three of these problems, we radically dissent from the inferences drawn by Mr. Wiley from the facts associated with the fourth problem. Mr. Wiley's position on this last point, stated elsewhere in the book, is summarized in the sections dealing with the interconfessional composition of the Y.M.C.A. and its relations with the Roman Catholic church on pp. 204-09.

For nearly seventy-five years of its history, the Y.M.C.A.'s, locally and nationally, furnished the best rallying center in American life for boys and young men who by birth or choice belonged to the Protestant churches. These Associations were interdenominational in fact long before there were councils of churches or a Federal Council of Churches. Their right to call themselves interdenominational was scarcely if ever challenged before 1920. This was true in universities and in city and town communities. The Y.M.C.A. has been and still is, as Doctor Fosdick recently said, "an interdenominational community at a time when a divided

<sup>1</sup> New York: Association Press, 1944, pp. xii-227. \$2.00.

Church is trying to get together." Its alliance with the Protestant churches was made indubitably clear by its requirements for lay and professional leadership, but even more by its close fellowship locally and nationally with the Protestant churches in the proclamation of Christian faith through meetings, Bible classes, social creeds, social action and, most uniquely, through its emphasis on the necessity of ministering to the whole man—body, mind and spirit. Neither the Y.M.C.A.'s nor the churches can escape this heritage, nor the present fact that wherever the Y.M.C.A. functions in university or in city according to its essential character, it is in a very special sense the Protestant community at work on some of the urgent problems of boys and young men and of society. Of the Y.M.C.A. William Temple, the late Archbishop of Canterbury, said shortly before his death that "it achieved a reality of world-wide fellowship while others knew it was wanted but could not find it." The Church can scarcely comprehend and certainly can never repay the debt it owes to this great Christian lay movement for its contributions to Christian unity and for its service as a pioneering center and religious laboratory for meeting the special needs of men and boys in life.

The past quarter of a century has witnessed the growth of many ecclesiastically created interdenominational agencies—notably the Federal Council of Churches, the many councils of churches, and the International Council of Religious Education. This fact, of such great importance to the future of the Church, has radically altered the relationships of the Y.M.C.A. with the churches. Instead of functioning in direct relationship with local churches and national denominational bodies, it has increasingly worked through, and with, federated local and national councils. Its right to call itself interdenominational is now frequently challenged since, obviously, its source of authority does not come from the official action of church bodies as does that of the councils. However, this would seem to be a problem of secondary importance and has to do with definitions of words more than with the realities of the situation. You do not, by describing the Y.M.C.A. in such negative terms as "nondenominational" or "undenominational," alter the fact that no other movement which has come out of the Protestant churches is so inclusive of all the divisions of Protestant Christianity, nor gives so much place to those with no denominational connection, as the Y.M.C.A. Interdenominationally, it is still much more inclusive than federated councils can be. If history is to be ignored, and the term interdenominational is to be reserved only for



those bodies officially created by denominations, then some new and positive word must be found to describe a Christian movement that for a century has given to laymen and clergy a vital and prophetic fellowship, uniting them in study, worship and work across all the lines that still unhappily divide the Christian community.

This is a problem which goes much deeper than words and their definition. In its essence it is a question of the relation of lay fellowships that are interdenominational in fact and spirit to the larger life of the Protestant community. As Mr. Wiley well points out, the Protestant church has much to learn here from the Roman Catholic church. When will the Protestant church awaken to the fact that its own progress in unity depends quite as much on these unofficial lay movements as on its more ecclesiastically created councils? They and the federated councils are equally essential channels for interdenominational fellowship and work, inextricably woven together, each performing indispensable functions according to its own character, but richly supplementing the other. Lay movements like the Y.M.C.A. composed of individuals subscribing to the Christian purpose of the organization have a freedom for action in the name of Christian faith and the Christian Church which federated ecclesiastical bodies by their nature cannot have. Also they can better afford to make mistakes—a fact of great importance to the progress of church unity.

The past twenty-five years have also witnessed another development; namely, the growth of Community Chests and the consequent closer identification of the Y.M.C.A. in larger cities with the Council of Social Agencies. This has had the effect of breaking the direct connection of the Y.M.C.A. with its supporting constituency which previously was and still is, although less obviously, overwhelmingly Protestant. Furthermore, it has resulted in further breaking its direct connections with the local churches on which it had depended for much of the work of educating the community on the purposes and work of the Association. Even more serious has been its effect on many Y.M.C.A. secretaries, since it has tended to keep them in closer working relationships with the local workers of the community than with the ministers, and with the Council of Social Agencies than with the church federations. There can be no denying the fact that the Y.M.C.A. is one of the important social agencies in the modern city community; and that it must accept the responsibilities of its position, but as Mr. Wiley points out, it is a "*religious social agency*

*whose historical alliance in this country has been with the Protestant churches."*

This creates serious problems for the Y.M.C.A. in its relations with the social agencies and the churches. Its present unique character in large cities as a "religious social agency" must be determined by both of these relationships and not by one or the other. The danger of the past few years has been that the Y.M.C.A. would allow its professional standards, its personnel policies and program philosophy and content to be shaped more by its partnership with community social agencies than with the churches. If continued this would be disastrous, for it would mean that the American community would lose the kind of distinctive *religious social agency* that the Y.M.C.A. has been and that the Y.M.C.A. would cease to make its creative contributions to problems of Protestant faith and unity.

The inclusion in the membership and control of the Y.M.C.A. of others than Protestants, and especially of an increasing number of Jewish, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic boys and young men, has made the Association even more of a meeting ground of confessions than it was in its early years. There are few problems of a confessional character arising out of the presence of Jews in the membership. There are no real problems with regard to those of Eastern Orthodox faith, due to the Y.M.C.A.'s remarkable work in Eastern Orthodox countries and also the fact that two of the Orthodox Churches are already members of the Federal Council. As Mr. Wiley indicates "the practical problem arises primarily from the presence of Roman Catholics in the Association. Mr. Wiley points out that a recent sampling of Associations revealed that one fourth of their membership was Roman Catholic. It should of course be evident that most of this Catholic as well as Jewish membership is not a voting but a privilege-using membership. While small numbers of devoted Catholics come into positions of leadership, the controlling group is not only non-Catholic; it is affirmatively Protestant. Basing his opinion on the co-operative work that has developed with Catholic social agencies, especially through the Council of Social Agencies and the U.S.O. and on the lessened opposition on the part of the Church to her members becoming members of the Y.M.C.A., Mr. Wiley holds out the hope that the Y.M.C.A. of the future might become a kind of "*interconfessional organization*" through which Protestants might develop new and fruitful "*relations with the Roman Catholic church.*"

We believe it is sound to speak of "the increasing *interconfessional composition* of the Y.M.C.A." We do not, however, believe that it is true or helpful to speak of the Y.M.C.A. as either an "interconfessional" or an "interfaith" *organization*. So long as the Y.M.C.A. chooses to remain a *religious* social agency it can have happy, fruitful relationships with the Roman Catholic social agencies. It can join, as do most of the local church councils, in respectful and useful fellowship with priests of the Roman Catholic church, collaborating with them in community and national concerns in ways which are in accord with the positions taken by the Catholic church on interreligious co-operation. It can continue to be a religious fellowship that is interconfessional in its spirit and character, in which individual Christians through their own choice (but not as representatives of particular confessions) work together with Christian motive and in a Christian spirit on the ethical and religious problems of men and boys in American life. It can also hold close to the spirit and works of Christianity many boys and young men who themselves are unable to avow at the moment any particular confessional relationship. This is a service performed without promoting among Catholics or others, as many Catholics fear it does, "indifferentism to religion." However, none of these ways of collaboration with Catholic social agencies or of fellowship and work with Catholic priests and laymen provides a basis for the Y.M.C.A. thinking of itself, in any discernible future, as an *interconfessional organization*, having "relations with the Roman Catholic church" in any sense that is even remotely comparable to the relationships which it has had for a century with the Protestant churches which have, in turn, given it the right to call itself an "interdenominational movement."

It is conceivable, although very unlikely, knowing its ideology and leadership, that the Y.M.C.A. would choose, in cities, or in its national character, to be a *secular and not a religious social agency*. As a secular agency, it might have relations with the Roman Catholic church that could be more carefully defined, as in the case of movements like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. But these relationships would be on the basis of the Association being a *secular and not an interfaith or interconfessional movement*. Moreover, such a position would break the Y.M.C.A.'s connections with the Protestant churches and embarrass certain sections of the Y.M.C.A.—notably the Associations in the colleges and universities which locally and nationally have been drawing closer to the Protestant

churches as evidenced by their recent partnership with the churches in creating the United Student Christian Council.

This is not a plea for the Y.M.C.A. to be an *exclusively* Protestant movement either in cities or universities. It should continue to welcome into its fellowship and work *those of all or no confessions* who want to enjoy its privileges and share in its work. Rather, it is a call for the Y.M.C.A. to strengthen its relations with Protestant churches and remain an essentially Protestant movement. A movement may be Protestant in character and yet have its doors wide open for fellowship and work with those of other than the Protestant faith. In fact, it is this characteristic of the total life of the Y.M.C.A. that proclaims its Protestant character even more than its requirements for voting or its religious message or methods. It is true, as Mr. Wiley asserts, that "the Y.M.C.A. has always been a challenge to the claim of individual Protestant churches that they are the exclusive possessors of the whole truth, to the claims of any Church to supreme and universal authority, and to the abridgment of the rights of individual conscience or of direct access of the individual save to God." This is simply another way of stating an essentially Protestant position and one that, in a different way, has been symbolized in the last twenty-five years by the growth of local church councils and the Federal Council of Churches. The Y.M.C.A. should affirm its essentially Protestant character rather than hope to become an *interconfessional organization* having "relations with the Roman Catholic church" as a further step toward Christian unity. The Y.M.C.A. as an inclusive Christian lay movement can perform a function of great importance not duplicated by church councils in training Protestant and Catholic boys and men to think and work together as Christians, and thus continue to be, what it has been, a seed-bed for a more ecumenic church. If and when—and may God hasten the day—there are relations between the Protestant community and the Roman Catholic church on religious grounds, these of necessity will be carried forward by a body that can speak authoritatively for the lay and ecclesiastical leadership of a united Protestantism such as the newly formed National Council of Churches. With such agencies lay movements having an essentially Protestant character like the Y.M.C.A. should be related in keeping with their historical alliances. As such they could preserve their freedom as nonecclesiastical lay movements, inclusive of all men and boys of religious good will, regardless of their confessional relationships or lack of them.

## Emphasis on Youth

L. WENDELL FIFIELD

THE first five months of 1945 have failed to produce any fiction which could be called outstanding. The various books which are at present leading in popularity hold that distinction not because of any outstanding merit but rather because of the lack of competition. Nor does the future appear at this time to be any more promising. There may be unexpected gems of literature in the lists announced, but on the surface it would appear that 1945 is to be a lean year so far as really meritorious novels are concerned.

This dearth of outstanding fiction seems at first surprising. One would expect that times such as these, when all human motives and emotions are so severely tested and tried, would produce that depth of living which is the inevitable prerequisite to great and discerning writing.

There are doubtless a number of reasons why this has not proved to be the case. Many of our best writers are busy with some form of governmental service. They are too preoccupied with the war to probe deeply the currents of life. Many of the younger writers are actually in some form of military service. Unquestionably they are storing up a vast reserve for future great literature, but their present activities and surroundings do not afford the leisure, nor the quietness for great and effective writing. Still other potentially outstanding novelists are devoting their present time and energies to writing about the war's immediate vicinities. Their books are vital to an understanding of what war is and what it means. But they are far from the accepted criteria of fictional greatness.

One cannot escape the conviction also that the entrance of the motion picture industry into the field of fiction has its effect upon literary standards. Fabulous sums are now being paid for books that can be converted into motion pictures. The temptation to the author to write with picture standards rather than great literary standards in mind is, therefore, a very insidious and insistent one. There is a vast difference between the qualities which make a book great in its own right and those which make it the basis for a great picture. Sometimes the two standards coalesce but not often. The postwar period will offer an interesting drama of the effort of literature to maintain its own standards of merit.

Of course, some books of fiction have been published which are of interest and worthy of the attention of thoughtful readers. Unfortunately, however, the number is not great nor are the books themselves outstanding. It is to be hoped the postwar period may be marked by the resumption of truly great writing in the realm of fiction, writing which possesses outstanding literary merit, which is characterized by a real depth of understanding, and which is clean and fine.

Of the fiction worthy of note which has appeared thus far in 1945 there seems to be a certain interesting emphasis upon youth. Possibly the reason for this is the tremendous destruction which the war has brought. Possibly it stems from the conviction that the proper understanding of youth is essential to the building of life in the future. The five books to which we turn in this review all illustrate in some form this attitude. Some of these books deal entirely with youth and its problems, others deal with matters of maturity, but at the same time try to introduce a certain emphasis upon youth and its importance.

*The Way*, by J. M. Hartley, is one in the increasing number of books which seeks to present in fictional form the meaning of the coming of Christ and the significance of His presence in the world. The author has evidently frequently wondered what happened to the three wise men who found their way to the stable side at Bethlehem. Consequently three of the main characters of the book are Caspar, the Persian; Melchior, the Buddhist; and Balthasar, the Egyptian. By choosing these three characters as participants in his story, the author is able to discuss something of the religious point of view of the three religious groups which they represent. He pictures them as setting out once more to relocate the child, now a youth, whose appearance in Bethlehem had so strangely moved them. They are not, however, the only central figures in the story. There is the ambitious young Centurion, Severus, loyal to Caesar Augustus and tremendously anxious to please him, who is moved by a strange train of circumstances into contact with the youth Jesus, and who comes to feel something of His transforming power. Then there is Leah, who in accordance with the common custom of her time, was the lover of the young Roman. Her efforts to be true to the deep affection which she had for Severus and at the same time to be loyal to the traditions of her race make her a figure whose tragedy increases as the story progresses. All of these various characters are represented in the book as seeking the way; the way to truth, the way to reality, the way to life that is full and



fine, as eventually they all find their way into the presence of the carpenter's son and discover in his youthful person the way to peace. The author has succeeded in creating in very interesting form the stories of his various characters, the various pathways along which they move, and the eternal realities into which they finally come.

A beautiful little legend entitled *The Child and the Emperor*, by Prince Hubertus zu Loewenstein, also deals with the child Jesus and the impact which Christ as a child had upon his time. In his legend, the author tells of a trip which Jesus, who is always referred to as "the Child," made with Joseph of Arimathea and His young friend Stephen to the Imperial City. This was in the days of Caesar Augustus, renowned for his goodness, his wisdom, his benign rule over all of the empire, recognized as god by most of his subjects. As the result of various events which are detailed in the story itself, the Emperor Augustus summons the Child before him. It is an intriguing situation which is thus created. The two participants in this interview represent the two conflicting ideas of power, of authority, of life itself; they represent the meaning of might and of love, of material strength and spiritual capacity. The Emperor is more and more impressed with the wisdom of the Child, he accepts the Child's statements as possessing the authority of an inner rightness, he is more and more deeply moved by them as the conversation proceeds until eventually in a sudden blinding flash he realizes the truth. "Deeper and deeper Caesar Augustus bent down until his knees touched the ground, *Tu Es Agnus Dei. Tu Es Christus.*" The period of Christ's youth is virtually unknown so far as the biblical narrative is concerned. It offers, therefore, an interesting field for speculation and for story-telling. The author of this book has created a beautiful legend. His story is interesting, revealing as to Roman customs, and most of all inspiring as it moves to its dramatic climax.

*Take Three Tenses: A Fugue in Time*, by Rumer Godden, is in my judgment, the most meritorious book of fiction yet published in 1945. The book is the human cavalcade of one British family through one hundred years. It is as much the story of the house as it is the story of the people whose destiny was worked out within it. This is indicated because the house has the first and the last word in the story. The house, it seems, is more important than the characters. "In me you exist," says the house." With these words the story opens . . . with these words the story closes. Within the house when the story opens there lives

the present lonely head of the family, General Sir Roland Ironmonger Dane. Through his mind there run many memories. Most of them are memories of youth—his youth and the youth of Lark. Other characters also appear: his mother, Griselda; his father, whose qualities of character are indicated by the fact that he was always called the "Eye."

There was Grizel, who came from America to work with the British in the present war. Grizel supplies the accent upon youth in the house where age was so rapidly taking its toll. There is Pax, the young flyer related to Lark, whose coming upon the scene causes the old General to create once more in his memories the experiences of his childhood and youth. It would spoil the story itself to tell it in detail. It is a story of good people, some of them fettered to a degree by custom and tradition, but all of them seeking to realize the values which life held for them. It is the story of love in its beautiful expressions, love sometimes realized, sometimes thwarted, but never dead.

This book is of considerable interest, not alone because of the story it tells, nor because of the fineness and delicacy of Rumer Godden's writing, but also because of the form which is used. The subtitle refers to it as "A Fugue." The author uses the technique of developing several threads of the story simultaneously as melodies are combined and woven together in a great fugue. The result is to create a sense of unity of past, present and future in the life of the house. It also requires very careful reading in order that the various threads of the story may be kept in their proper places and the different experiences of the characters may be visioned in their relationships. It is the kind of a story which has a rich reward for the reader.

The preoccupation with the experiences of youth is very clearly illustrated by the most recent novel by Anne Parrish. The title of it is *Poor Child*. This novel is written with all of the literary ability, all of the capacity for the masterful delineation of character which has made Anne Parrish one of our great novelists. The capacity of the writer to make her way into the mind of a twelve-year-old child and to interpret the subjective reactions of that child to the difficult situations with which he is confronted is a remarkable achievement.

The book itself is somewhat depressing. The experiences of Martin Doyle, its central character, are sometimes drab and always difficult. Even when he found the love for which his little heart was seeking, he discovered that within love itself there is an agony that can test and try

the soul. All in all, Martin is a pathetic little character, pathetic in the earlier experiences of poverty and of tragedy, pathetic in the later experiences of prosperity and security, possibly most pathetic of all at the end of the book when the ties upon which he had sought to depend gradually fall away and he moves into adolescence face to face with the grim realities which adolescence often brings. The book would be entirely depressing were it not for old Anna, the servant. Old Anna was gentle, loving and wise. As the book closes and Martin Doyle moves down the road which will lead him to the home of Anna, the reader feels that at last he has begun the climb to achievement and to hope. When one finishes the reading of *Poor Child* he probably wishes that Anne Parrish had dedicated her talents to the telling of a story less depressing and less pathetic. At the same time he has had the experience of enjoying masterful writing and rare artistry in character portrayal.

One of the problems of childhood and of youth is the relationship to other children. In his most recent novel, *The Folded Leaf*, William Maxwell deals with this problem. It is a sensitive, understanding story. The author possesses the same capacity which we noted regarding Anne Parrish for interpreting the inner thoughts of adolescent youth moving toward manhood. Your reviewer feels that the book would have been strengthened had a few passages, essentially vulgar in their nature, been eliminated. These passages comprise scarcely two pages of the entire book. Apart from this material, which in no way dominates the book, as unfortunately it does dominate some modern novels, the story is a beautiful and a sensitive one. It is concerned with Lymie Peters, a frail, studious, hero-worshipping youth, and Spud Latham, handsome, wilful, thoughtless and pugnacious. It tells the way in which these two lives came into contact with each other, the way in which the threads of each destiny became interwoven with the threads of the other, the way in which happiness and disappointment, success and defeat verging upon tragedy resulted from this Damon and Pythias relationship. Ultimately both fall in love with the same girl, bringing the story to its climax of conflict. There are other interesting characters who move across the pages of this book, but basically it is the story of Lymie and Spud. It grapples with fundamental problems of youth, it presents them with clarity. As the book comes to a close it is clear that it is primarily Lymie's story, the story of the way in which he left his youth amid the sheltering trees and the woods where he had so frequently turned for refuge in the times when his

spirit was tried and disturbed. Yes, Lymie left his youth there, and in the words of the last sentence of the story "It would never rise and defeat him again." One wishes that William Maxwell had been able to bring his story to a more definite conclusion, that there might have been a more concrete solution of the problems which the book contains. But in closing his narrative with a somewhat indefinable commitment of youth to the responsibilities of maturity, the author is doubtless true to life itself. No one period of life is a complete entity, no basic problems of character are eliminated by the emergence from one period of experience to another—they are merely changed to reappear in new form. So was it with Lymie and Spud.

If one may be permitted to become sermonic just for a moment—the problems, the trials, the struggles, the frustrations of the characters presented in the last three of our books would have been greatly simplified and mellowed had these characters found the essential message set forth in our first two books. There is little emphasis upon religion in *Take Three Tenses*, *Poor Child* and *The Folded Leaf*. There is no suggestion that youth can find strength the better to meet its problems, to disentangle its complicated experiences, to understand its impulses and desires and to control them, in the example of Jesus Christ. Yet one cannot but believe that the youth of the future will realize its destiny and make its supreme contribution to the destiny of the world only when through its allegiance to "the Child," it finds "the Way."

**The Way.** By J. M. HARTLEY. New York: The Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1944. pp. 187. \$2.50.

**The Child and the Emperor.** By PRINCE HUBERTUS LOEWENSTEIN. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945. pp. 70. \$1.50.

**Take Three Tenses: A Fugue in Time.** By RUMER GODDEN. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945. pp. 252. \$2.00.

**Poor Child.** By ANNE PARRISH. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945. pp. 273. \$2.50.

**The Folded Leaf.** By WILLIAM MAXWELL. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945. pp. 310. \$2.50.

## Book Reviews

**A Masque of Reason.** By ROBERT FROST. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1945. pp. 23. \$2.00.

At the close of this brief play in blank verse the author adds the words: "Here endeth chapter forty-three of Job." It is, indeed, a continuation of the colloquy of man and God presented to us in that book. The stage is set here for Job and his wife to query God as to the old ordeal, now far in the past. But Job, of course, represents man today. The whole is handled playfully. It is called a masque: there are all kinds of asides and divertissements and whimsies. But, underneath, the theme is serious enough. Job wants to know—all indirection and all orthodoxy old or new aside—"Why did You hurt me so?" Why did God permit "such devilish ingenuity of torture"?

It is hardly to be expected that any better answers will be given here than were given in the first place. Yet toward the close the mystery of God's collaboration with Satan in all ultimate things is suggested, and the stage directions picture Job as one who "has been dazed with new ideas." One of these appears to be that

God needs time just as much as you or I  
To get things done. Reformers fail to see that.

In the opening God takes the opportunity to give Job a belated thanks for having helped Him establish the principle that

There's no connection man can reason out  
Between his just deserts and what he gets.

Only after that classic demonstration had God really been able to reign freely; that is, in a way arbitrary in the eyes of men. "You set me free to reign." It is pointed out, moreover, that

the discipline man needed most  
Was to learn his submission to unreason.

And it had to be at *somebody's* expense.

Society can never think things out:  
It has to see them acted out by actors,  
Devoted actors at a sacrifice—  
The ablest actors I can lay my hands on.

In the last resort God's frankest explanation of Job's suffering is one with which we are already familiar. God had to show Satan that there was such a thing as disinterested service. Job could really be counted on. This seems to be a theme that interests Frost. We recall the second stanza of "Not All There":

God turned to speak to me  
(Don't anybody laugh)  
God found I wasn't there—  
At least not over half.

At other points the Frost we know of old appears here in the dryness and pungency of style, in the artistry, in the tirade against mystification and profundity, in the sly aspirations on science and modernisms, and in the demand for plain speaking and at least some reason, some design. And there is positive theology here. God and man meet, the ancient wisdom of Genesis and Job are recognized, and the Devil has his reality. But theology here is in safe hands. This Yankee will never be in danger of fervor or fanaticism. Perhaps he is too much on his guard. Yet some of the tacit affirmations show through the masquerade as it does through the beauty and humanity of his earlier poems. It has been said that Robert Frost's minute particulars run out into great universals. We miss here his incomparable minute particulars but his honesty with them underlies those great universals from which he has here partly drawn the veil.

AMOS N. WILDER

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**Studies in Christian Love.** By EDWARD W. HIRST. London: Epworth Press, 1944. pp. 128. 8s. 6d.

Doctor Hirst, who was formerly lecturer on Christian Ethics at Manchester University, has already made outstanding contributions to moral philosophy and Christian ethics in his earlier publications: *Self and Neighbour*; *Ethical Love*; and *Jesus and the Moralists*. The present volume is not up to the high level of the earlier ones, but it is nevertheless a significant exposition making clear the Christian attitudes toward fundamental moral problems of today. Its main defect is a too frequent curtailment of discussions of subjects, and there is also a failure to treat important aspects of problems. These deficiencies may be judged as due to the limitations of printing space imposed on British book production by war conditions. Even so, the book is deserving of wide circulation not only for its stimulation of thought, but also for its well-balanced judgments.

The nature of the central attitude, that is, Christian love, is described and discussed in the first three chapters. Christian love is "primarily spiritual"—"primarily," because it has also to manifest itself with reference to the conduct of our physical bodies in the material world. As "spiritual," fully conceived, it goes beyond merely humanistic morality. But the chief value of Doctor Hirst's book is in the remaining four chapters which discuss the Christian attitude for present conditions with regard to self-sacrifice, sex-love, property and world order. He maintains that under present conditions it is impossible for Christians to realize in their conduct all the implications of Christian love. But that imposes the obligation to hold up the Christian ideal and to strive to change the conditions that we may get nearer to its realization. Surely, it cannot be too vigorously emphasized that the Christian view of marriage is "primarily spiritual," in contrast to the tendency to consider it merely as a form of social contact. Rejecting the idea that private property is a "natural right," Doctor Hirst does not consider the extent to which it may be justified as an instrument for individual personal development. He defends the view that Christian love requires some advance toward collectivism. To be Christian, collectivism must be voluntary. "The degree of collectivization which is practicable depends vitally on the degree to which the members of the community cherish the Christian spirit, which is the spirit of love." Though statesmen and diplomats are necessary, a "Christianized world fellowship" is required for world order, and this can only



be with Christian love. "The *real* hope for the world is a Christian society established in all lands. . . ." The last quotation leads me to the only question I wish to raise: For such a Christian society in all lands must "all" peoples accept the traditional dogmas and ecclesiastical authorities of the Christian churches as we now have them? Or otherwise put: Does Christian love necessarily involve traditional Christian theology and ecclesiasticism?

ALBAN G. WIDGERY

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**Problems of New Testament Translation.** By EDGAR J. GOODSPEED. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945. pp. xix-215. \$2.50.

Doctor Goodspeed has been called America's leading Bible translator. He well deserves the title. In this new volume, the forty-fifth from his facile and prolific pen, he takes his reader into his workshop, as it were, and reveals something of the process by which a Bible translator operates. With all our modern improvements in scholarship and translation aids, there are still many questions about the translation of individual passages in the New Testament. These questions have held Doctor Goodspeed's special interest ever since he became a professor in the University of Chicago in 1898. They were pointed up for him particularly by his experience in making his own popular American Translation and in the meetings of the New Testament Section of the American Bible Revision Committee from 1930 to 1943.

Here Doctor Goodspeed discusses in a general way the tools with which a translator works and the various considerations with which he has to deal. Then he takes up 115 passages on which translators and commentators have differed. The method is, in the words of the author: "to give first the King James reading of the phrase or clause in question, as now printed in the editions of the American Bible Society; then the Greek, from the text of Westcott and Hort, which sometimes differs considerably from the Greek text which lay before the scholars of King James. Where the problem is one of translation alone, not of what the true ancient text was, the renderings of the earlier English versions are often quoted, with some discussion, to show how the King James reading came to be. The solutions proposed by representative private translations are then taken up, where they seem to have anything to contribute, though here it has not seemed worth while to go further back than Alexander Campbell (1826). I have usually added any contribution that recent lexical or grammatical studies may have made to the matter and have offered my own solution of the problem."

Let two examples suffice to give the flavor of the book. The passage in Matthew 6:27, translated in the King James, "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" is examined with particular reference to the word translated "stature." Good lexicography renders it "age." Six lexicons are cited. Epictetus, a contemporary of our evangelists, used the word in this sense, and so did the Septuagint and five of the Church Fathers. Evidently the King James translators, like Wyclif before them and the English Revisers after them, were reluctant to apply a lineal measure like a cubit to length of life. But there is the Thirty-ninth Psalm: "Thou hast made my days but as handbreadths," and there are current expressions today like "millions of money for an inch of time!" Among modern translations nine are quoted for "age" or "life," while

six are quoted for "stature" or "height." Goodspeed translates: "But which of you with all his worry can add a single hour to his life?"

Another typical passage is Romans 8:28, which reads in the King James: "All things work together for good to them that love God." This general idea begins with Tyndale (1525), was carried by Coverdale (1535), Rogers (1527), Taverner (1539), the Great Bible (1539), the Bishops' (1568), the Geneva (1560), and then by the English revision (1881) and the American (1901). But a study of the more ancient Greek manuscripts long ago made it probable that an additional "God" should be included as the subject of the verb "works together." Weizsaecker in his German translation (1875) and the Twentieth Century (1904) translate: "God causes all things to work together for the good of those who love him." That this is the meaning of the original text seems to be made certain now by the recent discovery of the Chester Beatty papyrus of Paul's letters. This document dates probably from the beginning of the third century and does include the nominative "God" with "works together." Goodspeed renders: "In everything God works with those who love him, to bring about what is good."

These two passages and the 113 others detailed in this volume are only a modest sampling, we are told, of the kind of studies that underlie "the thousands of decisions, philological and literary, which must form the basis of any serious translation of the New Testament."

ABDEL ROSS WENTZ

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**The Middle Span.** By GEORGE SANTAYANA. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1945. pp. 187. \$2.50.

George Santayana is an arresting figure. *The Middle Span* is the second volume of his autobiography, which bears the general title *Persons and Places*. The defining characteristic of Professor Santayana is that he sees intellectual experiences in the light of Epicurean pleasures, and he turns Epicurean pleasures into intellectual experiences. In a sense he is a hybrid. He has too much of Spain to be an American and there is too much of America to leave his Latin culture intact. He is too much of a Catholic to think as a Protestant, and yet he is so much a product of the type of rationalism, which is Protestantism after it has lost its faith, that he never finds security in his Catholic culture. In a sense he is the victim of his versatility. He has been betrayed by his own manysidedness. He becomes a kind of portent in a world which is trying to find unity and has not learned how to achieve oneness without self-stultification.

Of course, Professor Santayana throws unusual light upon all the things and people coming within the purpose of his pen. He always sees his friends with eyes unlike any others which have looked upon them and he always sees places with memories of other places changing the quality of his vision. He writes often with a pretty malice, providing you are not the person about whom he is writing, and he has perhaps a keener eye for the characteristic weakness than for the characteristic strength. He tries to be very careful of the wings of all the bright and fascinating insects, each of which he pierces with a strong pin and fastens upon the wall of his memory. But they are all objects—even though sometimes loved objects—of the shrewd objectivity of the clever collector of experiences. He never quite attains deep seriousness and his pictures of people

and places dissolve too quickly for the forming of permanent loyalties. He is something more than a dilettante but never quite a mighty philosopher. If you turn to his biography from Ray Stannard Baker's *American Chronicle*, you feel how curiously lacking in intelligent sophistication a bright American can be. If you turn from *The Middle Span* to Lord Tweedsmuir's *The Pilgrim's Way*, you feel how sophistication may be shot through by lofty purpose and so gain in nobility without losing in shrewd sagacity. But the heights are not for Professor Santayana.

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH

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**The Church College of the Old South.** By ALBEA GODBOLD. Durham: Duke University Press, 1944. pp. xi-219. \$3.00.

The inception, struggles, and development of the colleges of the four predominant Protestant denominations, Protestant Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist, in the four commonwealths of the Old South (Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia) prior to the Civil War, 1860, have been carefully investigated and recounted. Originally presented as a doctoral dissertation, the study has five main divisions. The first presents a brief history of each of the church-related colleges against a background of the respective church's establishment and its attitude toward, and emphasis upon, education; this is followed by an analysis of the basic motives and reasons for the founding of denominational institutions of higher learning. Ten items are listed and discussed, but more adequate training for denominational leadership, the maintenance and extension of denominational prestige, and rivalry with the state universities summarize all of them.

The study shows that the Protestant Episcopal and Presbyterian colleges had a more consistent record of emphasis upon academic standards and intellectual training; in general, however, the church-related colleges' standards were not so high as those of the state institutions. This disparity was especially evident in library and science facilities. As was true of all courses of study of the period, ancient languages and mathematics formed the core of the curriculum.

The fourth chapter, entitled, "Morals and Religion," minutely details the many rules, regulations, and methods employed in restraining the students and directing their moral lives. Meticulous attention was given to the daily observance of religious practices, less emphasis being placed upon the teaching of religion in the classroom than upon compulsory chapel attendance, the strict observance of the Sabbath, and frequent revivals.

During the period discussed, there was definite rivalry between the state and church institutions of higher learning. In all the states studied, except Virginia, the state university was established first; this delayed the founding of the church colleges. Since the cost of training in state universities was higher and the spirit of the secularism more prominent—there was, however, considerable attention given to religion—in general, the students came from the wealthier and more socially and politically prominent homes; so the church-related colleges began as institutions for young men and women from middle-class environments.

Doctor Godbold had to choose between keeping the form of a doctoral dissertation with its extensive footnotes and annotations or the rewriting of his material in a more direct, undocumented style; he used the former.

For religious leaders, educators, and laymen, this volume briefs a vast amount

of original material, which is very similar to that in the archives of all church-related colleges; consequently it can be taken as typical of the period and of the type of institution investigated.

CLYDE A. MILNER

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**The People of India.** By KUMAR GOSHAL. New York: Sheridan House, 1944. pp. viii-375. \$3.00.

An American finds himself in difficulty in reviewing a book on India. He believes in the right of self-determination and cannot but sympathize with any people who desire political independence. And in the case of India, with so vast a majority clamoring for freedom, it is hard to understand why the British cannot be convinced that something drastic must be done. Yet we Americans cannot follow many Indian nationalists.

To the author of this volume all is clear. The British occupation has been a curse from the beginning to the present day. All of India's evils have been produced or greatly aggravated by the British. Parallel with this arraignment of the dominant power is to be found the glorification of everything Indian; that is, of everything which is not so palpably evil that it cannot be set aside. And in such cases the evil is minimized as far as possible and the final resort is always to institute a comparison with doubtful parallels in western countries in order to take the sting out of the accusations which Indians feel are being leveled at them and their customs. We have our weaknesses and evils, glaring and without excuse, but surely this is not the way to blunt the edge of our disapproval and condemnation.

So anxious is the author to show that the British must go and that India can successfully take entire control of her own fortunes at once that a number of serious difficulties are not really faced. The antagonism between Hindu and Moslem, the problem of untouchability, how to deal with the native princes—these are real problems which do not seem to trouble the author of this book. The reader becomes more suspicious of the sanity of the author's judgments when the one and only cure for all the ills of India is said to be economic change and rehabilitation. This position seems to come out of the conviction that all problems are basically economic. The caste system, the condition of the outcastes, and even the animosities between Moslem and Hindu—when the author holds that such issues, as well as those which are clearly economic, are to be solved by industrialization, a new land economy and other purely material reforms, one can scarcely wonder at his shortsightedness as an ardent nationalist who is obsessed by one idea, that all will be well when Britain has lifted her hand and made India free.

EDMUND DAVISON SOPER

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**A Plain Man Looks at the Cross.** By LESLIE D. WEATHERHEAD. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945. pp. 187. \$1.50.

It requires courage and deep conviction for any man, however gifted, to discuss within the limits of two hundred pages such a deep and eternal subject as the cross of Christ. It requires even more courage to make such a deep and

limitless truth as the cross understood by any man, much less the plain man. The author takes courage in the fact that "the cross does not depend for its efficacy on being understood." Furthermore, he is spurred by a friend's assertion that "the plain man does not look at the cross at all." Given courage on the one hand by the fact that the genius of the theme outruns man's wit and wisdom; and prompted on the other hand by the plain man's supposed lethargy, Leslie D. Weatherhead daringly writes a helpful book, *A Plain Man Looks at the Cross*.

However, there are some plain men who do look at the cross. They look at it with longing. All their lives they have heard that "Christ died for our sins"; they have sung "There is a fountain filled with blood . . . and sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains." They have heard men say, "I lay my sins on Jesus." Plain men want to know why these assertions are justified. They are dissatisfied with their present knowledge. The author takes us through the various historic theories of the atonement: satisfaction, ransom, governmental and moral influence. These theories confuse rather than enlighten the plain man. Out of all the labyrinth of discussion the author arrives at the conclusion that the heart of the cross is in something Christ *did*. He revealed His love by doing something to redeem us. "It is that mighty *doing* that lies at the heart of the message of Christ."

Certain puzzling questions and phrases out of Christian lore are helpfully discussed and clarified. What is justification? "To be justified means to be known to be guilty but to be treated as righteous." Are the wages of sin death? "I cannot escape from the view that sin . . . if long continued in does lead to a condition for which we have to use severe terms." Are you saved? Many theologians tell us that we cannot affirm that we are saved lest by boasting we lose the humility essential to salvation. We should, therefore, in their view say "no." The author of this book says that in response to the question "are you saved?" we can answer, "Yes, for I have found in Him the road that will lead me home at last." And what of the word "blood"?

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood  
Shall never lose its power,  
Till the ransomed church of God  
Be saved to sin no more.

Blood is the symbol of outpoured love. "We, nineteen hundred years after the historic crucifixion on Calvary, are saved by the outpoured love of which blood is the symbol."

There are at least two needs that face us in regard to the cross. (1) Men need to be challenged dramatically by the cross. It is no fault of the cross that they are not challenged. It must be the fault of the messengers. The story of the cross is the "greatest drama ever staged" and we have failed to make men see that it is the greatest drama. A fellow countryman of the author of the book once wrote a play, *Cavalcade*. Do you remember the scene when line after line of soldiers passed a turn in the road where a crucifix towered above? The men marched while shot fell, fell on them and on the crucifix. As the day wore on the crucifix was beaten to the earth. Men, looking, saw Christ crucified again. We, beholding that scene, are speechless as we see Christ again dying for men.



Leslie D. Weatherhead, in moving prose, makes vivid the cross of Christ. (2) Men need to know that in the cross we have the answer to our gravest and deepest questions. Questions of race, creeds, labor and capital can be answered by bringing them to the foot of the cross. "Thousands have 'known' without understanding and been 'saved' without being able to explain."

ALBERT BUCKNER COE

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**Humanism and Human Dignity.** By LUTHER WINFIELD STALNAKER. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945. pp. 58. \$1.00.

In this small volume, which appears as number thirteen in the Yale Studies in Religion, the author enters a vigorous protest against the Absolutists' annihilation of faith in human worth and human capacity. It is his contention that Humanism is the champion of man against cosmic absorption.

The book is a very careful exposition of and critical commentary on the views of time, evil and freedom held by three neo-Hegelians: F. H. Bradley, Bernard Bosanquet and Josiah Royce. William James and F. C. S. Schiller are named as the selected representatives of Humanism, but only a few explicit references are made to them.

Following a brief introduction, the author considers in turn the three views mentioned above, a chapter being devoted to each. His critical attack assumes two forms throughout. First, he contends that the Absolutists' denials of the reality of time, evil and freedom are basically inconsistent with their own premises. Then, positively, he expresses the judgment that "Absolutism and Humanism are not so far apart as they might seem to be" (p. 19). The Absolutist is charged with embracing the emphases of the Humanist while trying futilely to defend a metaphysical system which denies them.

Certain difficulties appear in connection with the meanings given by the author to the term Humanism. First, he says, that he is using the term "as an antithesis to Absolutism" (p. 1). But Absolutism, as ordinarily understood and as described throughout this volume, is a metaphysical position, whereas when the author speaks of Humanism he has in mind a view which is professedly non-metaphysical. It would be nearer correct to say that he is using Humanism as an antithesis to one element in Absolutism; namely, Absolutism's denial of the ultimate significance of human personality. A truer antithesis to Absolutism is suggested in the author's pluralism and personalism and in his references favorable to Theism. However, the author's instrumentalism leads him to regard any metaphysic, not as being logically true nor as referring to what is metaphysically real, but simply as valuable. The limited nature of the acceptance of Theism is evident in his contention that ". . . the finite being . . . is the ultimate instrument of his own salvation" (p. 36).

The author's second definition of Humanism, namely, as "that view which vindicates the integrity of man" (p. 1), makes the title of the book appear redundant. A title such as "Absolutism and Human Dignity" would escape this difficulty and would be more descriptive of the book's contents.

WILLIAM F. QUILLIAN, JR.

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**The Lord's Supper in Protestantism.** By ELMER S. FREEMAN. New York: Macmillan and Company, 1945. pp. xvii-174. \$1.75.

To many Protestant ministers the observance of the Lord's Supper is a nuisance and to more laymen, no doubt, it is a bore. "The hymn before Communion" is the cue for the exit of those whose wish to escape a meaningless prolongation of the service is rationalized in terms of the exigencies of the Sunday dinner. That this has been felt to be a scandal by the minister and mildly disrespectful by the fugitives, has not changed the situation much except to reduce the frequency of the ordeal that was once called an ordinance.

The author has brought to this situation what the Quakers call a "concern," what the Episcopalians call orders, and what the Congregationalists call ordination. He has served as a minister in the latter two communions and brings to his study both the emotional and rational responses to the Supper that these different viewpoints evoke. The result is a gratifying and workmanlike job that should be read by every clergyman and passed on, somehow, to all the congregations that have lost the values of this central and creative act of worship.

He has given enough history to establish perspective; enough interpretation to establish values, and enough practical suggestions in ways of understanding and enriching the ordinance to make it something to look toward instead of to avoid. He has the nonliturgical feeling that what is central is "to do what Jesus intended to have done," and he knows that this allows no hit-or-miss or skimpy celebration. Having felt the austere and lofty dignity of the liturgist, he has provided practical suggestions which can rescue simplicity from being mere emptiness. And it has been done with directness and in short chapters which make it easily available for study by adult classes. It should be widely used for such purposes.

The Lord's Supper, by whatever name it is called, is likely to be the barrier to complete Christian fellowship for a long time. It is an odd and disturbing paradox that the fellowship supper ordained by Our Lord as a memorial (memorial? say my Anglican and Lutheran friends—and the rift appears) should prevent the widest and completest interfraternity among the denominations. This book is not designed to heal the breach; it shows one way, however, by which it may be healed. Only as Protestants recover its beauty and meaning will they be in a position to understand why their brethren of other designations will not abate their devotion to it. Certain it is that the approach to the Communion Table to which we all must eventually come is not to be found by reducing it to such indifferent value that all Christendom will abandon it. The unity of a zero is real but worthless. On the contrary, we may hope that by raising this dramatization of the death of Christ to its original and proper level in our apprehension and devotion, it will draw us nearer to that community of worship that should be found in the heart of our holy faith.

EDWIN McNEILL POTEAT

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**Greater Good Neighbor Policy.** By WADE CRAWFORD BARCLAY. Chicago: Willett, Clark and Company, 1945. pp. viii-257. \$2.50.

Of the significance of this book there can be no question. Doctor Barclay has written one of the few books of our time that involve a search into basic

human needs for answers to today's problems. He sees clearly that there can be no real "good neighbor policy" in the Americas or anywhere else in the world that depends mainly on legislation and organization; that it must go deeply into human and spiritual values.

Describing with approval much of what the United States has tried to do in the past few years to bring the nations of the Western Hemisphere together, the author has chosen to deal with one of the most difficult aspects of this inter-relationship—the religious and denominational element. The book is a plea for "understanding, tolerance and co-operation between Protestants and Roman Catholics in the interest of spiritual unity"—an end which, the author maintains, can only be achieved through "a remaking of the social order in accord with a truly Christian pattern."

The difficulties of such an undertaking are obvious. Some of them Doctor Barclay overcomes brilliantly; others not so well. He begins effectively by citing, as his first religious source, the 1932 encyclical of Pope Pius XI. He pays tribute to Jacques Maritain and to the "Sword of the Spirit" movement in Great Britain, and he gives special credit to Pope Leo XIII, who, he says, in numerous utterances from 1891 onward "indicated a sincere desire for the collaboration of Catholics and Protestants in efforts for the radical transformation of society and the realization that without such collaboration nothing greatly effective would or could be done." As a Protestant he admits that there have been good and bad happenings on both sides in Latin America, and he gives other evidences of a wish to be "objective and dispassionate" in his discussion.

Nevertheless the book at various points falls short of the high ideals Doctor Barclay has set before himself. In the judgment of this reviewer, at least, there are needlessly offensive forms of expression that might have been avoided had there been more actual collaboration with American Catholics in the preparation of the book. The discussion of "cultural pluralisms" will be very disappointing to many who share Doctor Barclay's high purposes—it overlooks so many experiences with our own Indian group, for example. At times the author seems too much preoccupied with the question as to whether the United States and the Protestant churches can become "predominant" and "determinative" in American life, and too little concerned with the broader inquiry, namely: How can we, all of us, Protestants, Catholics and others, North Americans and South Americans, learn to combine our resources and values into a better total culture that will represent the finest contributions of all toward "ethical and spiritual unity"?

W. CARSON RYAN

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**The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible.** By JOHN D. DAVIS. Revised and rewritten by Henry Snyder Gehman. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1944. pp. xii-658. 16 plates. \$3.50.

The proposed publication of *The Westminster Aids to the Study of the Scriptures* is something of a major event, and if the volumes which have already appeared are an omen of what is still to come, it is a decidedly auspicious event. The superb *Historical Atlas to the Bible*, edited by Professors Wright and Filson of McCormick Theological Seminary, will be warmly greeted by all students of the Scriptures, and Professor Gehman's revision of the *Westminster Dictionary of the*

*Bible* will not merely fill a need but will advance the cause of biblical study among laymen. The choice of Professor Gehman for this task is most happy, for he is singularly well equipped by training, competence, tradition, and professional position to be the reviser of this well-known dictionary.

The general point of view is conservative, but it is not blindly conservative. Moreover, the position on some questions is more conservative than that on others. Thus the discussion of Daniel seems to accept a late date and is cautious, fair, and balanced. There are practically no secondary materials in such prophets as Amos and Hosea. The criticism of Wellhausen in the article on the Pentateuch is not extreme or unjust, yet the closing paragraph of this article raises what seems to the reviewer the major criticism of the dictionary, and reflects as vividly as possible the characteristic point of view of the editor: "The development of the religion of Israel demands that the Pentateuch precede the prophets . . . . In order to understand the religious history of Israel it is necessary to retain the view of the Pentateuch that Moses was a monotheist and that his God was Jehovah. Moses was the framer of the religious system of Israel, and the founder of the Hebrew commonwealth and he remains, whether in a direct or more or less indirect sense, the author of the Pentateuch. Even though various scholars find documents or strata in the Pentateuch . . . . archaeological, philological, and historical studies support the verisimilitude of the Pentateuch."

The rights of historical criticism are admitted, but it seems to the reviewer that neither in the foregoing paragraph nor often elsewhere are they really taken seriously. A representation of the history, faith, and men of the Bible on the basis of the present form and arrangement of the biblical compilations, is simply out of the question. One is not infrequently puzzled by the scope of the articles. He may understand, perhaps, why in a work of this sort Ras Shamrah and Tell el Amarna should receive one short paragraph each, though the Moabite Stone gets almost two columns, and the Elephantine papyri receive no separate discussion, but it is not easy to understand why the Servant of the Lord and the Covenant are limited to less than one column each.

The dictionary is a mine of valuable information. Most of the articles are models of succinctness and precision. The discussion is usually up-to-date. The editor has utilized the abundant and variegated resources of contemporary biblical scholarship. The results of archaeological and historical studies have enriched the work almost throughout. The sixteen maps prepared by Dr. Georges Barrios and Mr. Harold Bilbo for the Westminster Atlas have been added at the end of the volume. This excellent volume is bound to have a wide circulation.

JAMES MUILENBURG

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**Philosophical Understanding and Religious Truth.** By ERICH FRANK.  
New York: Oxford University Press, 1945. pp. x-209. \$2.50.

Unquestionably this book, coming from the hand of one of the masters of the history of philosophy and Greek thought, establishes itself as a permanent addition to the literature of philosophical theology. Frank regards as inadequate the traditional arguments for the existence of God. They are derived from Greek philosophy which held the view that God was not beyond this world. In their original employment, they aimed not to prove the existence but the nature of

God. But, according to Frank, the "proofs" became unworkable when, with the Christian doctrine of a transcendent God, they were employed to demonstrate existence of the transcendent. Herewith, reason met an impassible barrier; and, henceforth, the new mode of cognition must be faith. The book is extraordinary as a philosophical justification of faith.

Secularism and the philosophical positivism of the modern period derive ultimately from a one-sided accentuation of Christian teaching—the freedom and dignity of man. The exaggeration is the modern declaration of the sole reality of man—a dogma of despair born of doubt. Since Descartes, in epistemology, it has meant subjectivism and the absolutizing of reason. In ethics, it has entailed the declaration of man's autonomy. Faith, on the other hand, exists where man is aware of, and rightly appraises, his limitations and finitude. Faith is the conviction "that our existence has its center not in itself." Part of the philosophical justification of faith consists in showing that it alone illuminates man's predicament and dissolves the forces of societal disintegration.

In the theory of religious knowledge Frank starts with Kant but seeks a different escape from subjectivism. He is Kantian (Frank would probably say, Christian) not only in accepting the transcendence of God to reason, but also in seeking to dissipate the dogmatic pretensions of theoretical reason in order to make room for faith. Frank further agrees with Kant that knowledge of God derives from practical life, not from the spectator's reason. But here Frank departs from Kant. God is not known as the prepostulate of human freedom and morality. The reverse is the case. The Absolute is known in man's practical experience of limitation, which, objectively considered, is God's determination of man. But how does man know that this limitation, which is determination, qualifies as "God"? The prevailing answer of the book seems to be that man discovers the Absolute to be God in that, insofar as he ceases to assert himself, man finds himself affirmed by the Absolute. Thus, "the real proof of God is the agonized attempt to deny God." God is, if I understand Frank rightly, something like a principle of negation and is known as negation so long as man lives in his defiant sovereignty.

But there is a positive aspect of faith. Kant is quite rejected in the implication which is everywhere present that Frank finds revelation in history; that is, in the truths of the Christian religion. These properly interpret man's existential status because they relate him to God and, thereby, give man's existence its dignity by providing it with its true center. But the great and fundamental ideas of Christianity: God, creation, divine will, providence, *et al.*, are symbols freighted with earthly imagery. These can never be truths of reason because reason, mistakenly, harbors the ideal of "coming on" its objects out of all relation to the character of the knowing process. That is, reason pursues a thing-in-itself by canceling away the subjective factors of the knowledge complex. In a brilliant, but, one would judge, a somewhat obscure and insufficiently developed theory, Frank argues that it is precisely by retaining the subjective factors in question—that is, the imagination with its symbols—that the religious object is rightly apprehended. The religious imagination is a mode of cognition specifically appropriate to the Transcendent. Imagination, in straining after the unimaginable, is a kind of knowing appropriate to faith in a transcendent God. Indeed, it is faith in its cognitive function. This provides for "existential" as contrasted with the truth of correspondence. Truth, here, is man knowing in a way conformable to the

object being known, namely, God. The final chapter is, in the writer's opinion, a master statement of the problem of freedom and one of the most penetrating commentaries on the meaning of the Pauline conception of the life of faith that is to be found in the history of interpretation.

ROBERT E. CUSHMAN

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**The Economic Order and Religion.** By FRANK H. KNIGHT AND THORNTON W. MERRIAM, with a Preface by Baker Brownell. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945. pp. viii-275. \$3.00.

The aim of this book is to portray divergent views on the relevance of Christianity to economic issues. Professor Knight presents the first essay as a social scientist who contends that the Christian ethic obscures the clarity of critical analysis, while Mr. Merriam argues that the economic ideals of liberal Christianity furnish the *sine qua non* for a satisfactory practical solution.

Stated in this way, the issue appears to be an argument between an opponent who considers the intellectual principles to be the paramount issue, and another who conceives the implementation of ideals to constitute the true problem. The whole debate comes perilously close to this dilemma. Knight maintains that the root ethic of Christianity is quietism, beginning with the interim ethic held by converts who had no responsibility for society; at the same time, he insists that salvation is achieved by faith and the will. "Romantic voluntarism" is "sentimentalism toward people and absolutism toward principles" (p. 124). The love or good will of which Christianity speaks cannot be translated into concrete social life except in small homogeneous communities. Ideal ethics do not help to solve group rights. Our present economic order will not benefit from vague sentimentalism; and the chief ills of modern industry are not due to failure of competition but to the business cycle from which no one profits. More analysis will help to clear up this problem. We must make competition work, although it is admitted that public utilities should be publicly operated, and perhaps a few other industries as specified by more searching analysis. Reformism, however, will not give us the answer. The social doctor must not have too much feeling for the patient and we must remember that social experimentation with increased governmental controls may bring rigid structure and tyranny.

Merriam, on the other hand, urges that economics has been divorced from religion and morals long enough. He sees in Christianity a "critically synthetic power" with four basic values: freedom, collective responsibility, equality and universality, based on theistic belief in a divine source of these values. He argues that whatever the original source of the Christian values, and however circumscribed their early application, they must be progressively universalized in the modern world with its more complex forms of economic activity. This would lead to an increase of public enterprise, greater emphasis on co-operatives and the fashioning of public instruments to implement the basic values.

At the close of the book, opportunity for rebuttal is offered to both authors. In this section, Knight urges with some justice that Merriam identifies his liberalism with Christianity, and Merriam shows quite clearly that for an economist, Knight is singularly blind to the growth of monopolies that destroy free markets and hence to the need for more government control. The whole book would be clarified had Knight's economy been compared more specifically with one like



Alvin J. Hansen's, or Merriam's Christian liberalism with a position like that of Reinhold Niebuhr. But the book is successful in provoking thought and it raises the right questions.

R. A. SCHERMERHORN

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**After Materialism—What?** By SIR RICHARD CLIFFORD TUTE. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1945. pp. 221. \$3.00.

Denis de Rougemont has warned us recently that "when the cannon and airplane factories have shut their doors . . . we shall enter the era of modern gnosticism"—a religious reaction as deadly "as the neurosis created by rationalism." Some such warning needs to be kept in mind when one undertakes to assess books such as this one which attempt to reconcile religion with modern science on the ground that "in its religious implications modern science amounts to a religious revelation." There is something wonderfully right about this book: viz., its refutation of materialism. And there is something wonderfully naïve about its "new interpretation of truth"—a compound of new physics, Liebniz, Alexis Carrel, Whitehead, Eddington, Jeans, Ouspansky, psychic research, Parmenides, Plato, African medicine men, Hindu Yogi, and mysticism. It is written by a layman. It is written with earnestness, lucidity, disarming candor and speculative daring. It is an amalgam of good science, poor philosophy and bad theology.

The book holds that "the science on which materialism is based is no longer recognized as true." The achievements of science in recent years have not been simple additions to previous knowledge. "They are denials that that knowledge can any longer claim to be knowledge." The author employs both relativity and quantum theories to make this plain. He makes it plain. The three-dimensional naïvete of the rationalistic outlook of the nineteenth century is exposed to the four-dimensional intuitions of the space-time continuum. The three-dimensional world is the world of the commensurable, of reason, and science. The four-dimensional world is that of the incommensurable, of intuition, mysticism and vitality.

Here lies the epistemological crux of the argument. Reason uses the concepts of language and the axioms of mathematics—both built on three-dimensional experience. "*It follows that the reason which depends on them cannot transcend it.*" Over this slender epistemological bridge we pass into panpsychism, spiritualism and amorphous mysticisms. Modern science confirms the mystics of all ages—and of all kinds!

It is not a surprise to a Christian that materialism should prove to be unsound. The amazing thing is that science should have been so long discovering it. Nor is metaphysical idealism new, nor monadology. Even psychic phenomena offer no special impediment to men of the spirit. The main trick is to observe the precise point where science leaves off and speculation begins. Sir Richard's facts are good; but vitalism, mysticism, spiritualism, eternal recurrence and re-incarnationism are compounded of philosophical and religious beliefs. We must bear in mind that "facts" themselves "belong to hierarchies of knowledge"; and that there is a great gulf fixed between intuition on the "astral plane" and revelation as the Christian understands it.

STANLEY ROMAINE HOPPER

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**The Message of the New Testament.** By ARCHIBALD M. HUNTER. Phila.: The Westminster Press, 1944. pp. 122. \$1.00.

Professor Hunter has developed a thesis which is receiving constantly greater attention—the thesis that the New Testament is a unity, and not an assortment of diverse writings expressing the interests and the viewpoints of many diverse writers.

At one time the study of the Bible was largely for the purpose of deducing from it, or of substantiating by quotations from it, one self-consistent theological system. The theology of the Church must be a biblical theology.

Then historical analysis appeared, and it has dominated the field ever since. Each author must be studied to learn his particular viewpoint, and each was different according to his background and his own subjective approach. There was a theology of Paul, a theology of Hebrews, a theology of the Synoptics, a theology of John, etc. Each was a different study, and it was considered a matter of interest when points of contact could be found between them.

This type of analysis has given us results of incalculable value which will never be sacrificed. But it has at least two obvious limitations. One is its narrowing effect. We come to know Paul and John and Mark, but we are apt to lose the comprehensiveness of the gospel which made the early Church one Church and its gospel one message.

The other limitation is the tendency to make the New Testament a museum piece, academically interesting to those with historical interest as showing the ways in which ancient men met ancient issues, but not containing any permanent gospel which justifies our perpetuating it today.

In answer to this, Professor Hunter undertakes to show that the New Testament is a unit. One theme runs through it, the gospel of the early Church. For the sake of convenience he divides it into three parts: "One Lord"; "One Church"; "One Salvation." Each of these he traces in detail through Paul, I Peter, the Synoptics, Hebrews, and John, to show that in spite of differences in background and vocabulary, the primitive Church was really saying the same thing through all these writers.

Where so many Scripture texts are used it is natural that the reader finds himself questioning some interpretations, but the argument seldom rests on one passage. Possibly Professor Hunter works hardest when he tries to fit the entire New Testament, including the Gospels, into the pattern of the *kerygma* as it is sifted out of the Book of Acts. And his argument that Jesus consciously founded the Church seems a beating of straw. If he means, as he seems to mean, merely that Jesus called people to prepare themselves to enter the Kingdom after the coming judgment, then argument is not necessary, but that was scarcely the Church which existed after Pentecost.

Minor criticisms are easy because the argument is detailed. But the emphasis of the book is wholesome, and it should add strength to the movement for recovering the Bible as a book for our times.

W. A. SMART

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**They Found the Church There.** By HENRY P. VAN DUSEN. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1945. pp. xii-148. \$1.75.

In a series of books Dr. Van Dusen has been making a notable contribution to the world-wide Church. *For the Healing of the Nations* is an unusually moving and informing travelogue which gives vivid pictures of the emergent younger churches in various parts of the world, particularly in the Pacific, the East Indies, the Far East, and India. *What Is the Church Doing?* is a most heartening account of the current Christian scene, primarily of the churches in Europe, the younger churches, and the growing movement toward Christian unity. Dr. Van Dusen has the rare gift of combining readability, clarity, and proper perspective, both as to time and geography.

The present volume displays these same qualities. It is built around the experiences of men in the armed services with missions and with the Christians who are the products of these missions. These experiences are largely told in the words of the men themselves. Most of the narrators are Americans and laymen. A few Australians, several chaplains, and some non-military writers are included, but the personal narratives are chiefly by American enlisted men and non-clerical officers. The major part of the stories has to do with the islands of the Pacific. This is partly because it was in these islands that American servicemen first came into extensive contact with missions. Yet illustrations have also been gathered from Africa, the Near East, Iran, India, Burma, and China. In the Pacific the material is arranged by islands and groups of islands. In each chapter something of the historical background is given to assist the reader in understanding how the missions which the servicemen saw came to be.

The story which Dr. Van Dusen tells is inspiring. The history and the testimony borne by the eye witnesses from the armed forces reveal amazing transformations of individuals and of groups. We have surprised comments on the contrast between the cleanliness of Christian villages and the dirt and stench of the neighboring pagan villages. We read of a chapel built at their own initiative by Christian natives in a cemetery in which American marines are buried. We hear of Kusaie, an island in Micronesia, where before the coming of the Christian faith violent deaths were common and where, after contact with whalers, population had declined almost to the vanishing point, but where, thanks to the work of missions, no murder has been committed for a generation, minor offenses are so few that no jail exists, divorces and poverty are unknown, and the population has increased. Dr. Van Dusen has not confined himself to any one denomination. He portrays Protestants and Roman Catholics, Methodists, Anglicans, Lutherans, Congregationalists, and Seventh Day Adventists. Among all he finds the sure signs of transformation wrought by the gospel of Christ.

Dr. Van Dusen would not have us suppose that all or even a majority of Americans in the armed services will return enthusiastic advocates of missions. Christian missions have always been an enterprise of a minority. Yet it seems clear that this minority is to be re-enforced by some who, through the exigencies of war, have seen at firsthand the Church in its newer frontiers.

KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE

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**The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England.** By ERNEST A. PAYNE.  
London: Student Christian Movement Press, Ltd., 1944. pp. 158. 6s.

This is a small but meaty book on the place and significance of England's Nonconformist movement. The narrative, interpretation of historical facts, and the author's own incisive remarks, give evidence of real acquaintance with the field. Granting that Nonconformity has been losing ground during the last thirty years, the author contends that a continuation of that trend would constitute a calamity since a world going increasingly secularist desperately needs those moral and spiritual ideals and incentives for which the Free Churches have consistently battled. The suppression of the left wing of the Reformation on the Continent, for instance, was one cause for the rise of secularism and for the creation of unsatisfactory and ultimately dangerous church and state relationships.

The author begins his study with the protesting groups of the Reformation era, contending that their opposition to church authoritarianism and Erastianism was historically justified. The Puritan Revolution which followed was merely a continuation of the old struggle for a free conscience and religious liberty. Although the eventual outcome was not all to the good, issuing at times in "fissiparous sectarianism," it prepared the way for the Toleration Act of 1689, which was a step in historical progress, though real liberty of conscience still needed to be won.

The treatment of the Wesleyan Revival may not seem adequate to Methodists, but for the purposes of the thesis it does justice to the "great new spiritual impulse . . . which brought new vigour and power to all the existing branches of the Church . . . sending out influences into all spheres of life and, ultimately, to all parts of the world" (p. 74). In spite of the presence of Toryism within the Methodist fold, and in spite of the avowal that it was "as much opposed to democracy as it was to sin," it nevertheless brought many of the common people into positions of leadership in the labor movement as well as in church life, as the author conclusively proves.

In the era of Revolution, Nonconformity is represented as continuing its championship of liberty of conscience, while inaugurating new efforts in philanthropy, social reform, education, as well as evangelistic campaigns in the growing industrial centers and in missions overseas. Some of the notable leaders of "dissent" are briefly but effectively presented—Richard Price, R. W. Dale, Carey, Martineau, Spurgeon, Joseph Parker, H. P. Hughes, Charles Silvester Horne, General Booth and others. The participation of Free Church leaders and agencies in prison reform, antislavery crusades, Chartism, trade-unionism, the Salvation Army furnishes abundant proof of the presence of social vision.

The story of the twentieth century (chapter 8) lends support to D. W. Brogan's claim that Nonconformity has definitely declined as a world factor, modified, however, as the author contends, by two hope bringing facts: the formation of world organizations by the Free Churches and the establishment by them of an organization for common action along national lines. Moreover, one cannot forget the great contributions of many Free Church scholars and theologians to world Christianity. And, in addition, some significance can be ascribed to the moral and spiritual revival in England of the past few years.

The last chapter on "The Contribution of the Free Churches" offers more ground for the author's hopeful outlook. The witness of the Free Church movement, needed now as much as it was in the past, may be expressed briefly as

follows: (1) The gospel comes before the Church—faith before order. (2) Religious toleration is essential to the growth of a vital Christianity. (3) The prophetic witness must be granted free expression and not be dominated by a priestly ecclesiasticism. (4) Our field of religious interests has now definitely become "global." (5) Ecumenicity is here to stay and must ever be kept in the forefront of our thinking and action. (6) Though traditions are valuable and are to be cherished, rigid traditionalism must be transcended because "the old world is dead." (7) We must relate religion to all aspects of life in the spirit of a passionate spiritual evangelism.

A. W. NAGLER

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**The Predicament of the Church.** Contemporary Essays by Nine of England's and Europe's Contemporary Religious Leaders. London: Lutterworth Press, 1944. pp. 145. 8s. 6d.

**The Nature of the Church.** A Report of the American Theological Committee. Chicago: Willett, Clark and Company, 1945. pp. 126. 75¢.

Here are two small books of real worth. One is diagnostic in character and the other definitive in purpose. They represent an effort to get at the answer as to the meaning and place of the Church in the contemporary scene. Both are written by theologians of standing in their respective countries and Communions.

A. D. Lindsay, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, faces the initial problem of "Duty to God and State." A. M. Murray and M. Versfeld, of the Department of Ethics, University of Cape Town, South Africa, consider the matter of "The Church's Role in Politics." Scholars and leaders from India, Armenia, and Switzerland all contribute to this well-packed bit of diagnostic writing dealing with the disunited Church, Christianity, Communism and other pressing problems.

These writers are aware of the predominant place given to economic considerations in the present-day life patterns. They are aware of the overshadowing materialism that clouds any spiritual interpretation of life. Our standards of success are largely material and economic. Men no longer ask seriously, "Is it right?" "Is it just?" or "Is it true?" They ask, "Is it practical?" "Will it pay?" A people absorbed in the physical and material aspect of life are rendered oblivious to those essential features of spiritual and ethical living which it is the purpose of the Church to promote.

It has come to pass in our day that a wholly artificial and moral distinction has grown up in the thought and practice of modern man. On the one side are the immediate and practical necessities that make up the activities of the workaday world. These secular interests are the preponderant interests. They furnish the drives for politics, business and social adjustments. Religion appears as something added. Worship is divorced from work, faith from conduct; and the two spheres are made so mutually exclusive that often they are like "the Jews and Samaritans that have no dealings with each other."

This is one aspect of the predicament of the Church. Dr. Lindsay's essay, which occupies one-third of the first book, is a discerning and eloquent plea for the Church to clearly state and promote the Christian ethic for our day. "The alternative to a Christian ethic, under contemporary industrial, scientific and

competitive conditions, is an ethic of materialist utility which at the moment takes the form of profit making. If a realistic Church does not recognize and use the machinery of the present social structure to assert its legitimate interests the State must develop a confessionalism of its own, which will not be Christian, but naturalistic."

Of course, here the question arises as to the nature of the Church. Dr. Brunner in his chapter asserts that the cause of the Church's present plight is due to "the disintegration of the substance of the Church."

One of the most interesting events in the recent history of American Theology is the publication of a report of "the American Theological Committee" on *The Nature of the Church*. This book by American theologians should be read along with the volume by the British and Europeans. Covering a five-year period of study, the diversities of point of view as to the nature of the Church are frankly stated by competent scholars. The basic unities and identities are clearly brought to the fore. Eleven Protestant Communions have their points of view competently stated. Dr. Clarence Tucker Craig, of the Oberlin Graduate School of Theology, contributes the interpreting chapter which concludes:

"What is the Church? It is the sphere of God's salvation in the present, and it is prophetic of his ultimate triumph in the Kingdom of God. It is constituted by the revelation of his grace in Jesus Christ. Its message is the gospel of redemptive love. It is marked by the presence of his Holy Spirit with all of its evidence of divine power. It is the people who have given allegiance to God in response to his gracious call. It is a body witnessing to his rule by their trust and obedience. This Church is set in the midst of a world where God's will is not yet done. The forms of organization exist to maintain its life and proclaim the message to the needs of men down the ages. They are simply earthly vessels which help to protect the heavenly treasure in the midst of its earthly task. But all of the branches must be truly united in order to witness to the rule of God in a Church Militant. For they all look forward to the Church Triumphant, which is the Kingdom of God."

These two tracts for the time—one from overseas, the other from America—should be read and studied by ministers "for such a time as this." There will be no significant revival of religion in our time unless the Church clearly recognizes its nature and faces its predicament. The Church must evangelize or die. For the Church, history is just beginning. God's grace is to be vindicated in the arena of man's soul.

OSCAR THOMAS OLSON

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**Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity.** By W. L. KNOX. The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy. London: published for the British Academy by H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1944. pp. 108. \$2.75.

The Schweich Lectureship has produced a number of works which stand on the very highest level of scholarship, and this new volume fully maintains the tradition. It is written by an expert in one of the most difficult fields of New Testament criticism, and his book is a marvel of erudition and subtle analysis. The Schweich foundation allows for only three lectures on the chosen subject, and Dr.



Knox has been obliged to relegate a great part of his material to footnotes, which occupy at least half of every page. This is unfortunate, for the reader's attention is constantly distracted from the main argument to the notes, which are no less valuable than the text itself, and need to be studied with close attention. It is seldom that any one desires a book to be longer, but this one might have been read to more advantage if it had been expanded to twice the length by weaving in the footnotes with the exposition.

The general theme is the influence of Hellenistic thought on early Christianity—an influence which went far deeper, in the author's view, than has generally been suspected. In the first lecture he deals with the Synoptic Gospels and the Book of Acts, showing that foreign ideas had affected the current Judaism, and that even the Palestinian sources of the Gospels had been colored by them. Certain words employed by the evangelists betray, when carefully examined, the transformation of Semitic into Greek ideas. The second lecture is mainly concerned with Paul, whose outlook is that of the Dispersion, in which traditional Judaism had become fused with Greek speculation. Comparisons are drawn between the assumptions of Paul and those of Philo who reflects the later Stoicism. Dr. Knox is somewhat contemptuous of Philo, whom he regards as little more than a dull compiler of better men's opinions. Philo is certainly dull, and dullness, even in a philosopher, is hard to tolerate; but Dr. Knox might have been more merciful. The third lecture is devoted to the Fourth Gospel, in which the author finds the clearest evidence of the Hellenistic influence. He holds that the whole Gospel must be interpreted in the light of the Logos ideas set forth in the Prologue. Jesus is none other than the manifestation of the divine Mind which sustains and orders the world. Each section of the Gospel is examined from this point of view. One cannot but feel that Dr. Knox attempts to prove too much. He himself admits that the Evangelist never loses sight of the historical Jesus, and that he tells his story with real dramatic power. Could the Evangelist have written such a moving and lifelike narrative if his mind had been set all the time on the development of a metaphysical theory? Insofar as he tries to make the Hellenistic influence all-pervasive in New Testament thought, Dr. Knox, to our mind, has not succeeded. The value of his book lies rather in its treatment of detail. Familiar words and phrases take on a new meaning under his microscope; affinities and differences reveal themselves where no one previously had guessed them. Sometimes we may feel that he has drawn large conclusions from far too slender evidence, but he seldom fails to draw attention to some important fact which has been overlooked. The methods of critical inquiry have never been applied to better purpose than in this very notable book.

E. F. SCOTT

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**The Philosophical Heritage of the Christian Faith.** By HAROLD A. BOSLEY.  
Chicago: Willett, Clark and Company, 1944. pp. xi-176. \$2.00.

The editor of one of our church magazines has said, "Too often church leaders are the masters of minor talents and the champions of inconsequential virtues." Such sterile professionalism could hardly be so much in evidence if we ministers spent more time *exploring* the Christian heritage and less time using selected portions of it to bolster up a previously assumed position. Dr. Bosley's ability at putting



his own insights into a language that is not too technical should open many doors for fruitful investigation into the dynamic realities of the Christian faith. It is an encouraging sign that such lectures were given at a Pastors' Institute. The titles of the chapters indicate only very generally his emphases: "Philosophy—The Handmaid of Religion," "The Dependability of Truth," "The Richness of Beauty," "The Strength of Goodness," "The Reality of Love." The total spirit of the book is a call to look at life as a whole, to see it as process, movement in conformity with built-in structural patterns, forms, or purposes. The modern religious leader, as much as the secularist, is beset by the tendency to look at life fragmentarily, to become rigid in his attitudes, trite in his utterances and thus increasingly irrelevant to man's basic needs. Even the social gospeler tends "to work so hard at being good or doing good" that he loses touch with dynamic realities. Such straining in the moral or theological harness is in large part due to our lack of awareness or self-knowledge. Not knowing the why nor the wherefore of our actions, attitudes, hidden motivations, we become inflexible in the hands of the creative growth processes. Nor is it possible to know ourselves until we know the past which has so largely shaped us, both with and without our consent. The child is father to the man: the past with its gross and subtle influences molds, constricts or releases the present.

One can scarcely read these lectures without coming to see in some degree how incidental, one might even say irrelevant, are the so-called "issues" between orthodoxy and heresy, "modernism" and "fundamentalism," Origen and Tertullian, Darwin and William Jennings Bryan. It is well to remember that the intellectual framework of the Christian faith "is a philosophical tradition which rests principally upon the thought of the great Greeks Plato and Aristotle"—both of them non-Christians. But no one worries over that fact—*now*. Before one's prejudices, tenaciously held dogmas, and denominational defensiveness can fall from him, he must voluntarily explore his past and see for himself that God is not confined within brick, stone or orthodoxy: He is found wherever there is life, growth, honest inquiry, quiet contemplation. Too many of us worship the idea of God rather than God; faith is an emotionally congenial word we subconsciously substitute for authority. Dr. Bosley asks us to open our eyes to ourselves, our past, to explore with confidence. Where great spirits like Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Thomas Aquinas have walked, we should scarcely feel lost.

FLOYD H. ROSS

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